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A DISCOURSE Concerning the KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST, AND Our Union and Communion with him, &c.

By *William Sherlock*, Rector of St *George Buttolph lane, London.*

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MDCLXXIV.

THE PREFACE.

Christian Reader,

I Am conscious to my self of so honest a design in writing this Discourse, that I am very very well armed against those various censures, which are the usual reward of such Attempts; for there is no such Sanctuary against the rudest clamours, and the most unjust reproaches, as a good Conscience. I was heartily grieved to see so many well-disposed Persons abused with words and phrases, which either signifie nothing, or have a very ambiguous and doubtful, or a very bad sense; when I have observed that great zeal, which some men have for the Worship of God, I have often thought, what great

Instruments they might be of Gods glory, were their zeal directed and governed with Knowledge and Judgment; and when I have observed, how innocently and vertuously some of those men live, who have espoused such Principles, as naturally tend to make them bad, I have thought, what excellent Persons they might prove, did they rightly understand so excellent a Religion, as is published to the World in the Gospel of Christ; such thoughts as these at first engaged me in this Work, to rectifie those mistakes, which will either make men bad, or hinder and retard their progress in true goodness, which is so pious and charitable a design, as may at least plead my excuse, though it should appear to be a mistaken zeal.

In the management of this Discourse I have carefully avoided all personal reflexions, have not med-

led

led with the lives and actions of men, which I am ſo charitable as to hope, may be more orthodox than their judgments: I have repreſented their opinions in their own words, and am not conſcious to my ſelf, that I have put any other ſenſe upon their words, than they intended, and I cannot ſee, what reaſon any man hath to take it ill; that I repeat that, which he himſelf thought fit to publiſh: where they pretend to argue gravely, I have examined their Arguments with all poſſible gravity and ſolemnity; where they plainly toy and trifle, I have ſo far complied with their humour, as to ſmile ſometimes, though as modeſtly as any man can deſire: I have taken care, not only to unteach men, what was amiſs, but to explain and confirm the true notions of Religion, leſt any man ſhould ſuſpect, that under a pretence of rectifying mi-

stakes I designed to expose all Religion: what men will account severe, I cannot tell, because the gentlest Arguments will appear severe to any man, who is pinch't by them; but I have given no hard words, and have sometimes called things by softer names, than they deserve, on purpose to avoid the imputation of severity, which is now the common artifice to teach men to despise and reproach, what they cannot answer: and if after all this I cannot escape without some hard names and hard censures, I must be contented with my portion; and indeed no man ought to expect better usage, who considers, that Mr. Baxter himself, who hath deserved so well for his pious labours, could not escape, when he touch't upon their Darling Notions.

And now, Christian Reader, I shall beg no more of thee, than to

read

read this Diſcourſe with an honeſt and unprejudiced mind, and as I did not compoſe it without imploring the guidance and direction of God, ſo I recommend it to thee with my hearty prayers, that it may prove as uſeful, as my intentions were honeſt and charitable.

Farewel.

THE

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THE INTRODUCTION.

CHAP. I.

ALL errour hath ſome appearance of truth; it being impoſſible to believe a plain and undiſguiſed falſhood: but yet moſt men are ſo eaſie and credulous, ſo impatient of ſevere inquiries, or byaſſed by ſo many corrupt paſſions and intereſts, that they are too often impoſed on by very ſlight appearances: And commonly the firſt and fundamental miſtake is in a confuſion of names, in a doubtful and ambiguous uſe of words, eſpecially in matters of Religion, which depend upon Revelation, and muſt be judged by the publick and authentick Records of inſpired men: for

it happens too often in this Caſe, that men conſider nothing but the ſound of words, and from thence form ſuch uncouth *Ideas* of Religion, as are fitted to the meanneſs of their underſtandings, or gratifie their natural Genius and diſpoſition, or are calculated to ſerve an intereſt: And thus the Goſpel of our Saviour is defaced and obſcured by affected Myſteries, and Paradoxes, and ſenſeleſs propoſitions; and Chriſt himſelf, who was the brightneſs of his Fathers glory, and the expreſs image of his Perſon, who in the moſt plain and perſpicuous manner declared the will of God to us, is repreſented with a thicker Vail upon his Face than *Moſes*, and the glory of the ſecond Covenant is much more obſcured with a miſt of words, than the firſt was with Types and Figures.

This will appear to any man, who ſhall obſerve, what ſtrange interpretations are commonly made of thoſe Texts of Scripture, eſpecially in St. *Pauls* Epiſtles, wherein Chriſt is mentioned, what abſurd propoſitions are built on them, what pernicious conſequences drawn from them, to defeat the great ends of Chriſts appearing in the fleſh.

I always took it for granted, that Christ and his Religion were very well agreed, but, if we believe some men, there is as irreconcileable a difference between the Religion of *Christs Person*, and of his *Gospel*, as between the *Law* and *Grace*: For the *Gospel* of Christ is as severe a despensation as the Law, which dooms all men to Eternal misery, who live not very innocent and vertuous Lives; but the Person of Christ is all Grace, a meer refuge and Sanctuary for the wicked and ungodly.

Surely here must be a mistake somewhere; for I am still of the mind, that the Person of Christ is not at odds with his Gospel; and that the Person of Christ will save none whom his Gospel condemns; or if Christ would save those, whom his Gospel condemns, *viz.* impenitent and incorrigible Sinners, I cannot imagine how men should know this without a particular Revelation, and I hope, they do not mean this by the private testimony of the Spirit to work assurance in them; And yet we can think of no other way, since the Gospel is so silent in this matter: But it is easie to observe, where

the miſtake lies: for ſome men, where-ever they meet with the word *Chriſt* in Scripture, always underſtand by it the Perſon of Chriſt, and thus Faith in Chriſt, and hope in Chriſt, and the like Phraſes, are expounded of a fiducial relyance and recumbency on the Perſon of Chriſt for Salvation in contra-diſtinction to obedience to his Laws, which ſets up a *Religion of the Perſon of Chriſt* in oppoſition to the *Religion of his Goſpel.* And therefore the beſt way of rectifying this miſtake, which ſets the Perſon and the Goſpel of Chriſt at ſuch odds, is to examine the various ſignifications of this name Chriſt in Scripture, which ſhall ſerve as an Introduction to what follows.

And firſt *Chriſt* is originally the name of an Office, which the Jews call the Meſſias or one anointed by God: for under the Law, their Prophets, Prieſts, and Kings, were inveſted in their ſeveral Offices by the Ceremony of anointing them with Oyl, which was typical of that divine Unction the Holy Jeſus received at his Baptiſm, when the Spirit of God deſcended on him like a Dove. All thoſe legal

legal Unctions were accomplisht in *Jesus* of *Nazareth*, whom God anointed with the Holy Ghost, and with power, *Acts* 10. *Verse*, 38. which was his Consecration to the Mediatory Function, and vertually contained all those Offices of Prophet, Priest, and King, which are not properly distinct Offices in Christ, but the several parts, and different administrations of his Mediatory Kingdom.

His Preaching the Gospel (which we commonly call his Prophetical Office) was the exercise of his Regal Power and Authority, in publishing his Laws, and the conditions of Eternal Life. Hence the Gospel is so often called the Kingdom of Heaven, and our Saviour tells *Pilate*, that he was born to be a King, and the principal exercise of his Kingly Power in this World consists in bearing witness to the truth, *John* 18. 37. that is, it was an Act of his Regal Power to Conquer errour and ignorance, to destroy the Kingdom of darkness by the brightness of his appearing, and to erect his Throne in the hearts and Consciences of men, by the power and evidence of truth; which is a true spiritual Kingdom.

And he was a Kingly Prieſt, a Prieſt after the order of *Melchizedec*, who was King of *Salem*, (the new *Jeruſalem* which comes down from Heaven) and Prieſt of the moſt high God. *Hebr.* 7. *Verſe* 1. when he offered himſelf a Sacrifice for ſin, he acted like a King. No man took his life from him, but he had power to lay it down, and he had power to take it again, in the 10*th* Chapter of St. *John*'s Goſpel, and 18. *Verſe*. Herein he differ'd from other Kings, that he laid the Foundation of his Kingdom in his own blood, purchas'd and redeem'd his Subjects by the Sacrifice of himſelf.

And that, to which we commonly appropriate the name of Regal Power, that authority he is inveſted with, to Govern his Church, to ſend his Spirit, to forgive ſins, to diſpenſe his Grace, and ſupernatural aſſiſtances, to anſwer Prayers, to raiſe the dead, and judge the World, and beſtow immortal life on all his ſincere Diſciples, all this is the reward of his death and ſufferings, and is therefore called his interceſſion, becauſe like the interceſſion of the high Prieſt under the Law, it is founded on his expiation and Sacrifice.

fice. *With his own blood he entred once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. Hebrews* 9. *Verſe* 12. ſo that *interceſſion* ſignifies the Adminiſtration of his Mediatory Kingdom: the Power of a Regal Prieſt to expiate and forgive ſins.

This is a true account of the nature of Chriſts Kingdom, and the method whereby it is erected. He firſt conquers the minds of men by the power of his Word and Spirit; and reduces them into ſubjection to God; and then he pardons their ſins, and raiſeth them into an immortal life by the expiation of his Sacrifice, and that Power and Authority, which is founded on it.

And this is the interpretation of the name Chriſt, which ſignifies a Mediatory King, immediately appointed by God to that Office, and conſecrated to it by a Divine and Supernatural Unction. And thus the name *Chriſt* ſignifies in thoſe places of Scripture, where *Jeſus* is ſaid to be the *Chriſt*, *i. e.* that Meſſias, whom God promiſed to ſend; Which are ſo many and ſo obvious, that I need not name them.

Secondly, Though Chriſt is originally

nally the name of an Office, yet it is used in Scripture to signifie the Person, who is invested with this Office: for the use of names being for distinction, and the Office of a Mediator, which is the first signification of the name Christ, being appropriate to Him, it might well serve for a proper name, when once it was known, who was *the Christ*. And therefore though before his designation to this Office was publickly owned, he was only called *Jesus*, the name given him by the Angel, before he was born; yet, when by his resurrection from the dead, He was declared with power to be the Son and the *Christ* of God, *Christ* became as much his proper name, as *Jesus* was before. In the Gospels, which contain the History of his Life and Death, He is always called *Jesus*, because all this time it was disputed, whether he were the *Christ* or not; but in the Epistles, which are directed to the Christian Churches, which were founded on this Faith, that *Jesus* is the *Christ*, he is as familiarly called *Christ* as *Jesus*, and oftentimes by both, *Jesus Christ*. For there can be no mistake in the Person, by what name soever he

he be called, whether it belong to his Office, or Nature, or circumstances of his Life and Fortune, if there be but *One*, to whom that name belongs.

Thirdly, Christ signifies the Gospel, and Religion of Christ, as *Moses* signifies the Writings, and Laws of *Moses*, and the Prophets, the Writings or Sermons of the Prophets; in the 16. Ch. of St. *Lukes* Gospel, 29. *Verse*, *They have Moses and the Prophets, let them hear them*; and in the 31. Verse, *If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be perswaded, though one rise from the dead.* And there is nothing more usual in common speech, than to call any Laws, or Religion, or Philosophy, by the name of the first Authors: Thus in the 6. Chapter to the *Galathians* 15. *Verse.* In *Christ Jesus neither Circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new Creature*: that is, in the Gospel, and Religion of Christ, nothing is of any value to recommend us to the favour of God, but a new Nature, a holy and vertuous life: The Law preferr'd Circumcision before Uncircumcision, but the Gospel of Christ makes no such distinction; but instead of those external signs requires

quires the inward purity of heart. Thus in the ſecond Chapter of the *Ep. to Coll.* 8. *Verſe*; *Beware leſt men ſpoil you through Philoſophy, and vain deceit, after the traditions of men, after the Rudiments of the World, and not after Chriſt.* Where *after Chriſt* is oppoſed to the *traditions of men*, and the *Rudiments of the World*, and therefore muſt ſignifie not the *Perſon*, but the *Religion or Goſpel* of Chriſt, *i. e.* have a care, leſt you be corrupted with the fooliſh opinions and ſuperſtitions of men, which are inconſiſtent with the Chriſtian Philoſophy, a plain contradiction to the Doctrine and Religion of Chriſt. And in the 6. Verſe, *As you have therefore received Chriſt Jeſus the Lord, ſo walk in him. i. e.* obey the Doctrine of Chriſt, as you have been taught it by us, for ſo in the next Verſe he calls it, *Being eſtabliſhed in the Faith, as you have been taught.* The like we may ſee in the 4. Chapter of the Epiſtle to the *Epheſians*, 20, 21. *Verſes*, *But you have not ſo learned Chriſt, if ſo be, you have heard him, and been taught by him, as the truth is in Jeſus.* Now what can *learning Chriſt* ſignifie? but learning the Goſpel of Chriſt. And how could

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the *Ephesians*, who never saw Christ in the flesh, be said to *hear him*, in any other sense, than as they heard his Gospel preacht to them, *ver.* 8. and to be *instructed in him, as the truth is in Jesus* (for so ἐν αὐτῷ ἐδιδάχθητε signifies, not, as our Translators render it, being taught by him, but instructed in him) must be expounded of his Religion, in its genuine and primitive simplicity, so as Christ taught it his Disciples, without the mixture of such corrupt and impure Doctrines, as the Gnostick Hereticks had taught under the name of Christianity. These I take to be very convincing allegations of the use of the name Christ, for his Doctrine and Religion.

Fourthly, It is acknowledg'd by all, that *Christ* sometimes signifies the Church of Christ, *which is his body, the fullness of him, that filleth all in all:* And thus we must understand those Phrases of being *in Christ*, *engrafted* into Christ, and *united* to Christ, which signifie no more than to be a Christian, One, who belongs to that Society, whereof Christ is the Head and Governour: thus it is used in the 12. Chapter of the *Ep.* to the *Romans*, 5.

Verse.

Verſe. We being many are One Body in Chriſt, i. e. we are all but one Chriſtian Society, which is the One Body of Chriſt. Thus *Brethren in Chriſt, i. e.* Chriſtian Brethren, 1 *Coloſſians.* 2. *Verſe.* And, *if any man be in Chriſt, he is a new Creature:* 2. *Ep.* to the *Corinthians* 5. Chapter 17. *v. i. e.* every ſincere Chriſtian is a new Creature, or, whoever profeſſeth the Faith of Chriſt, and lives in Society with the Chriſtian Church, hath obliged himſelf to live a new life: but of this more in its proper place.

Thus variouſly is the name *Chriſt* uſed in the Writings of the Apoſtles, which hath occaſioned very great miſtakes in ſome mens Divinity, who are very zealous to advance Chriſts *Perſon* to the prejudice and reproach of his *Religion.* Who, inſtead of thoſe ſubſtantial duties of the love of God, and men, and an univerſal holineſs of life, have introduced a fanciful *application* of Chriſt to our ſelves, and *Union* to him, ſet off with all thoſe choice Phraſes of *cloſing with Chriſt, and embracing Chriſt, and getting into Chriſt, and getting an intereſt in Chriſt, and truſting, and relying, and rowling*

our

our Souls on Christ: And instead of obedience to the Gospel, and the Laws of Christ, have advanced a kind of Amorous and Enthusiastick devotion, which consists in a passionate love to the Person of Christ, in admiring his *Personal excellencies, and perfections, fulness, beauty, loveliness, riches, &c.* The Foundation of all which Riddles, and Mysteries, is, that these men make the Person of Christ almost the sole object of the Christian Religion, and whatever is spoken of Christ with respect to his Offices, his Laws, and his Religion, they understand of his Person, and personal excellencies. And therefore the design of this discourse is to reconcile the Person of Christ with his Religion, that men may not abuse themselves with a pretended devotion to our Saviour, while they contemn his Laws, and purposely defeat the great end of his coming into the World. And to that end I shall discourse on these following Arguments.

First, Of what use the consideration of Christs person is in the Christian Religion; Secondly, What the Knowledge of Christ is; Thirdly, Wherein our Union to Christ, and Communion

Communion with him consists; Fourthly, Christs love to us, and our love to Christ.

CHAP. II.

Of what use the consideration of Christs Person is in the Christian Religion.

THE first thing to be stated is, of what use the consideration of Christs *Person* is in the Christian Religion: For those men, who talk so much of the *Person*, and *Personal excellencies* of Christ frequently without any sense, and generally without any just ground from Reason or Scripture, are very clamorous, and alarm the World with strange jealousies and fears; as if there were a party of men started up, who design to make *Christ useless*, and to reduce Religion to its first Natural State, which knew no Priest, nor Sacrifice, nor Mediator. A design, which, I profess, I am wholly a stranger to, as I believe all those are, who are so much charged with

with it; The Foundation of *my* hope is that, which is the Foundation of the *Chriſtian Religion*, *the Sacrifice and Interceſſion of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* But I doubt not, it will appear in the Sequel, what the ground of theſe calumnies are, *viz.* that *we are charged with making Chriſt uſeleſs, only becauſe we dare not make his Laws and Religion ſo:* And to prevent ſuch ſcandals for the future, I ſhall lay the Foundation of all in this inquiry; of what uſe the conſideration of Chriſts Perſon is in the Chriſtian Religion.

By the Perſon of Chriſt I mean, what all men ought to mean, who talk of Chriſts Perſon, *viz. Chriſt himſelf*, as every mans Perſon is himſelf: and the only proper conſideration here is the greatneſs of his *Perſon*, who is the θεάνθρωπος or *God man*, the Son of *God*, in whom his Soul was well pleaſed, who left the glories of an Eternal Throne to undertake the work of mans redemption; and this ſuggeſts many uſeful conſiderations, which have a great influence upon Religion.

As firſt, This is a plain demonſtration of Gods love to Mankind, that he ſent ſo *great* and ſo *dear* a Perſon,

as

as his only begotten Son, into the World to ſave Sinners. All Religion is founded on a belief of Gods Goodneſs, *He that cometh to God muſt believe, that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them, that diligently ſeek him. Hebr.* 11. 6. that is, muſt believe his Being and his Providence, that he loves, and takes care of good men; for no man will ſerve God, who does not hope to be the better by it. And therefore every Religion had its proper demonſtrations of Gods Goodneſs: Natural Religion was founded on thoſe natural evidences of the Divine bounty and goodneſs in making and governing the World; the Moſaick Religion on thoſe miraculous deliverances, God wrought for *Iſrael*, and that particular providence, which watched over them: the Chriſtian Religion, on the Incarnation, Death, and Reſurrection of the Son of God; a work of ſuch ſtupendious love, that it is the wonder of Angels, and the aſtoniſhment, as well as praiſe of men. No man can doubt of Gods good will to Sinners, who ſees the Son of God cloathed with our fleſh, and dying as a Sacrifice for our ſins; this gives relief to

our guilty fears, and does encourage us to retrieve our past follies by new obedience, that we have so great an assurance of God's goodness; for he had nothing greater to bestow on us, than his Son; And *he that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?* 8 Rom. 32.

Secondly, This gives great reverence and authority to the Gospel, that it was preached by so great a Person, as the Son of God. Laws always partake of the fate and condition of the Law-giver; the greater opinion we have of his Wisdom, and Reverence for his Person, the more sacred regard have we for his Laws; and therefore *Numa* pretended, that he received his Laws from the Goddess *Ægeria*, to procure a greater veneration for them; which was imitated by *Lycurgus*, and other Law-givers: thus *God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past to the Fathers by the Prophets, hath in these last days spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed Heir of all things, by whom also he made the Worlds.* 1 Hebr. 1. 2. And his greatness and Authority gives

an inviolable sanction and just reverence to his Laws. *Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip; for if the word spoken by Angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward, how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation, which at first began to be spoken by the Lord,* 2. Hebr. 1. 2, 3. To the same purpose is that Parable in *Luke* 20. 9. *&c.*

Thirdly, The greatness of his Person gives great authority to his example. He came to be our Prophet and our guide, to teach us by his Precepts and his life; now we love to imitate great Persons, and none so great as he, who was the brightness of his Fathers Glory, and the express image of his Person. His example secures the honour and reputation of vertue, and gives us an evident demonstration, wherein the perfection of our nature consists; for he lived up to the perfection of humane nature, and the only way to be perfect is to live as he lived. Nay the greatness of his Person makes all the expressions of his love and good-

neſs the more wonderful. That the Son of God ſhould become man, that when he was rich, for our ſakes he ſhould become poor, that the great Lord of the Creation ſhould become a Miniſter and Servant, that the Lord of life and glory ſhould ſuffer and die: Theſe are ſuch expreſſions of love and goodneſs, as we can never fully imitate, becauſe we can never be ſo great, as he was, but yet they powerfully convince us, how reaſonable it is for us to ſtoop to the meaneſt offices of kindneſs, ſince we can never ſtoop ſo low, as the Son of God did, when he came down from Heaven, and took up his Lodging in the grave.

Fourthly, This aſſures us of the infinite value of his *ſacrifice*, and the power of his *interceſſion*: He was a Prieſt of a higher order than that of *Aaron*, and his Sacrifice of a greater value than the bloud of Bulls and Goats: God cannot but be pleaſed, when his own Son undertakes to be a ranſom, and to make atonement for Sinners, which is ſo great a vindication of Gods Dominion and Soveraignty, of the authority of his Laws, and the Wiſdom and Juſtice of his Providence,

dence, that he may securely pardon humble and penitent Sinners without reproaching any of his Attributes. And we can reasonably desire no greater security for the performance of this Gospel Covenant, than that it was sealed with the bloud of the Son of God, which is such a confirmation of God's Covenant and Promise, as the World never had before; Christ is the surety of a better Testament, *Hebr.* 7. 22. ἔγγυος, one who undertakes for the performance of it, and the security he gives us depends on the vertue of his Priesthood and Sacrifice, and the power of his Intercession; for so in *Verse* 21. the Apostle tells us, that God had confirmed the Priesthood of Christ by Oath, *The Lord hath sworn and will not repent, Thou art a Priest for ever after the Order of* Melchisedec: And whereas other Priests died, and left their Priesthood to their Successors, *He continueth for ever, and therefore hath an unchangeable Priesthood, and is able to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. Verse* 23, 24, 25. And who can desire a more powerful Mediator than the Son of God,

God, to whom God hath given such signal demonstrations of his favour and acceptance by a voice from Heaven, and by the glory of his Miracles, and his Resurrection from the Dead?

And that the vertue of Christs Sacrifice and Intercession depends very much on the greatness of his Person is plain from the Epistle to the *Hebrews*; the design of which is to show, how much the Priesthood and Sacrifice of Christ excels that of the Law, and the Foundation of all is laid in the first Chapter, where the Apostle discourses of his greatness and excellency, that he was the brightness of his Fathers glory, and the express Image of his Person; the Heir of all things by whom he made the Worlds, exalted above all Angels, who hath an everlasting Throne and Scepter, and shall continue, when all other things moulder and vanish away.

But Fifthly, The Person of Christ is of no other consideration in the Christian Religion, than as it hath an influence upon the great ends of his undertaking, *i.e.* we must expect no more from Christ upon account of his Personal excellencies and perfections,

than what he hath promised in his Gospel: He hath told us there, whatever he intends to do for us, and hath charged us to expect no more from him. *Math.* 7. 21. *Not every one, that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doth the will of my Father, which is in Heaven.* That is, you must not expect, that I will be better to you than my word, and receive you into the Kingdom of Heaven upon easier terms, than I have promised, I shall be moved with none of your flattering speeches, but how good and kind soever you may fancy me, unless you obey those Laws I publish in my Fathers name, I declare before hand, that I will disown you, when I come to judgment. For indeed should he absolve and justifie those men, whom the Gospel condemns, that is, wilful and incorrigible Sinners, this were to disannul that Covenant which he had sealed with his bloud: Christ is the object of our Faith and Hope, only as he is our Saviour, and he is our Saviour in no other sense, than as he is our Mediator, and he mediates for us as our Priest, that is in vertue of that Covenant,

nant, which he hath ſealed with his bloud, and therefore we have no reaſon to expect any thing from the Perſon of Chriſt, which is not contained in his Covenant, much leſs which contradicts it, for that would be in effect *to renounce his Mediation, and to truſt to the goodneſs of his nature*: And let any man judg, whether this be not to ſet up a new Religion, which hath no Covenant, and no Promiſe; for whatever we can expect from Chriſt by vertue of a Promiſe, is contained in the Goſpel, and if we expect any thing elſe from him upon his Perſonal account, it is without a promiſe: which at beſt reduces us to the ſame ſtate, in which the World was, before God had made an expreſs revelation of his will, when all their hopes were founded on that natural perſwaſion they had of the divine Goodneſs, that Faith, which is the Foundation of *Natural Religion, that God is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him. Hebr.* 11. 6. thus theſe men truſt in the *Perſon* of Chriſt without any Promiſe, nay (which makes the caſe much worſe) in contradiction to the terms of that

Covenant, which he ſealed with his bloud: *they quit his Promiſe and his Covenant, to rely and rowl upon his Perſon.*

This is ſo very abſurd at firſt ſight, that I know no man will be ſo ſenſeleſs, as to owne it *in ſo many words*, nor do I charge any man with it; but I ſay, this is the natural interpretation of truſting in the Perſon of Chriſt, in his blood, and merits, and ſatisfaction, fulneſs, and alſufficiency, and of relying and rowling the Soul on Chriſt for Salvation, and the like Phraſes of a late date, in which ſome men place the whole myſtery of the Goſpel; if they underſtand any thing more by them, than expecting to be ſaved according to the terms of the Goſpel Covenant, that is, by believing and obeying the Goſpel of Chriſt; And certainly they muſt mean ſomething more than this, or elſe they raiſe a great noiſe and clamour in the World, and confound mens minds with obſcure and unſcriptural phraſes to no purpoſe: as will appear more in what follows.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Of the Knowledge of Christ.

SECT. I.

THE happineſs of Mankind conſiſts in the Knowledge and Love of God, who is the greateſt and the beſt Being, and therefore our good God, who is never wanting to his own glory, and the happineſs of his Creatures, hath taken care in all Ages by one means or other to make known himſelf and his will to the World.

In the firſt Creation of all things he left ſuch viſible impreſſes of his own Divine Wiſdom and Power on the works of Nature, and planted in the mind of man ſuch a natural knowledge of himſelf, that it was as eaſie to diſcover the firſt Author of all things, as it is now for a well diſpoſed eye to ſee the Sun, when it ſhines; And while man preſerved his innocence, God himſelf did not diſdain to converſe with him, and to give him very preſent and ſenſible demonſtrations of his Power and Providence. In

In after Ages as Mankind grew more corrupt, and declined to Idolatry, God afforded good men the frequent apparitions of Angels, who were the great Miniſters of his Providence; and to inſtruct the more degenerate part of Mankind, he raiſed up ſome great examples and Preachers of Righteouſneſs, ſuch as *Enoch*, and *Noah*, and *Abraham*; and gave ſuch plain and undeniable proofs of his acceptance of theſe men, as might reaſonably incourage others to imitate their examples. He tranſlated *Enoch* immediately to Heaven, and preſerved *Noah* and his Family in the Ark, when he deſtroyed the reſt of the World by a deluge of Waters, which was a ſignal warning to that corrupt Generation, while the Ark was preparing, and a great example to Poſterity; he ſent *Lot* out of the ruins of *Sodom*, and made *Abraham* the Father of a great Nation, which was a convincing argument, how dear theſe good men were to God, and what others might expect from him, who would worſhip and fear him, as they did.

But when the World would not be reformed by theſe ſingle Examples, God

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chose the Posterity of *Abraham* to be a publick and constant demonstration of his Power and Providence, and care of good men. For when God chose the Posterity of *Abraham* to be his peculiar people, he did not design to exclude the rest of the World from his care and providence, and all possible means of Salvation, as the Apostle argues in *Rom.* 3. 29. *Is he the God of the Jews only? Is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes of the Gentiles also:* which argument, if it have any force in it, must prove Gods respect to the Gentiles before the preaching of the Gospel, as well as since, because it is founded on that natural relation God owns to all Mankind, as their merciful Creator and Governour, which gives the Gentiles as well as Jews an intrest in his care and providence. This plainly evinces, that all those particular favours, which God bestowed on *Israel*, were not owing to any partial fondness and respect to that people, but the design of all was to encourage the whole World to worship the God of *Israel*, who gave so many demonstrations of his power and providence. For this reason God brought

Israel

Israel out of *Ægypt*, with great signs and wonders and a mighty hand, (when he could have done it with less noise and observation) that he might the more gloriously triumph over the numerous Gods of *Ægypt*, and all their enchantments and divinations, and that he might be honoured on *Pharoah* and all his Host. For this reason he maintained them in the Wilderness at the constant expence of miracles; fought all their Battles for them, and many times by weak and contemptible means overthrew great and puissant Armies, drove out the Inhabitants of *Canaan*, and gave them possession of that good land. I say one great and principal design of all this was to convince the World of the Majesty and Power of the God of *Israel*, that they might renounce their foolish Idolatries and Country Gods, and consent in the worship of that One God, who alone doth wondrous things; this account the Psalmist gives of it; that God wrought such visible and miraculous deliverances for *Israel*, to make his glory and his power known among the Heathen; *The Lord hath made known his salvation, his righte-*

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ouſneſs hath he openly ſhewed in the ſight of the Heathen. Pſalm 98. 2. *That the Heathen might fear the name of the Lord, and all the Kings of the Earth his glory, i. e.* that all Nations might worſhip God, and all Kings ſubmit their Crowns and Scepters to him. *Pſal.* 102. 15. that by this means they might be inſtructed in that important truth, *That the Lord is great and greatly to be praiſed, that he is to be feared above all Gods; for all the Gods of the Nations are Idols, but he made the Heavens.* *Pſal.* 96. 4, 5.

And as God ſet up the people of *Iſrael* as a viſible demonſtration to all the World of his power and providence, ſo he committed his Laws and Oracles to them, from whence the reſt of the World, when they pleaſed, might fetch the beſt rules of life, and the moſt certain notices of the divine will.

In ſuch ways God inſtructed the World in former Ages, by the light of Nature, and the examples of good men, and the Sermons of the Prophets, and the publick example of a whole Nation, which God choſe for that very purpoſe.

But

But when long and sad experience had proved all these ways ineffectual to reform the World, at last God sent his own Son into the World, to make a full and perfect Declaration of his will, to give the best rules of life, and to encourage our obedience by the most express promises of a blessed Immortality. This was one great design of Christ's appearing in the World, to reveal and declare God to us. *John* 1. 18. *No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him*: and in Math. 11. 27. *All things are delivered unto me of my Father, no man knoweth the Son, but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father, but the Son, and he, to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.* That is, God hath now committed unto Christ all the secret purposes of his Counsel concerning the Salvation of Mankind, which were concealed from Ages. None of the Prophets, which lived before, did so fully understand it, nor have we any other certain way of knowing this, but by the Revelation Christ hath made to us.

Thus in *John* 14. 6, 7. *Jesus saith unto*

unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life, no man cometh unto the Father but by me; if you had known me, you should have known my Father also, and henceforth you have known him, and have seen him. That is, I alone declare the true way to life and happiness, and no man can thoroughly understand the will of God but by learning of me, and therefore whoever knows me, *i. e.* whoever is acquainted with the Doctrine and Religion I preach, knows my Father also, that is, is thoroughly instructed in God's mind and will, as he proves in the following Verses. So that *to know God*, is to understand the will of God concerning the Salvation of Mankind, and *to know Christ*, is to understand that Declaration he hath made of Gods will to the World, *i. e.* the Gospel, which he Preached, which is therefore called, *the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.* 2 *Cor.* 4. 6. That is, that glorious manifestation God hath made of himself to the World by Christ: for the *face of Christ*, signifies all that, whereby he made himself known, as a man is known by his face, that is, his Laws, and Religion, and

Miracles,

Miracles, whereby it appeared, that he was the Son of God, the great Prophet and Saviour of the World; by all this the glory of God was manifested; in which the Apostle alludes to that shining glory, which appeared on the face of *Moses*, when he came down from the Mount; which was but typical of that bright and glorious manifestation, God would make of himself by Christ. God was seen in Christ, *he that hath seen me hath seen my Father*, that is in plain words, the will of God was fully declared to the World by Christ: upon which account too (as well as with respect to his divine Nature) he is called *the brightness of his Fathers glory, and the express image of his Person. Hebr.* 1. 1. those discoveries Christ hath made of God, being a bright and glorious reflexion of the Nature and Attributes of God, of his Eternal Wisdom, and truth, and holiness, as true a representation of the divine nature and will, as any Picture is of the person it represents. It is plain, that in this sense Christ is called the image of God. 2 *Cor.* 4. 4. *Lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, which is the image of God, should shine unto*

unto them. Where Christ's being the Image of God comes in very abruptly, unless we understand it in this sense, that he is the Image of God with respect to the glorious Revelations of the Gospel, which contain a true and faithful account of God's Nature and Will.

The result of all is this, that God is the last and highest object of Religious and saving Knowledge, *i. e.* that the only Knowledge necessary to the purposes of Religion, is such a knowledge of God's Nature and Will, as is sufficient to direct our actions, and encourage our obedience: and whereas God was formerly known by the light of nature, and the works of Creation and Providence, and those partial and occasional revelations of his will, which he made to the World; now the only true medium of knowing God is the Knowledge of Christ, who came into the World to declare God to us.

He knows God best, who is best acquainted with those Revelations Christ hath made of God's will: *i. e.* who understands the Gospel in its full extent and latitude. This is the meaning of that expression in *John* 17. 3.

This is life Eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent, i. e. the only way to Eternal Life is to know the nature and will of God, and the only certain way of attaining to the knowledg of God is by knowing Christ, whom God sent into the World to publish the Everlasting Gospel, who hath made more perfect revelations of Gods will, than ever the World had before, and who alone hath brought life and immortality to light; so that to know Christ is not meerly to know his Person, which we can have no other knowledge of, than what he hath been pleased to reveal to us, but to be acquainted with the whole Doctrine of the Gospel in its native simplicity, as he published it to the World, which I observed before. The Apostle calls this *learning Christ*, and being instructed *in him, as the truth is in Jesus.* For when we speak of the Knowledge of Christ, we must consider him as our Prophet, and so to know Christ signifies to know his Gospel; and to preach Christ is to preach his Gospel, to expound all those rules of life and Articles of Faith, which are contained in it;

See Ch. 1. concerning the significa. of the name Christ.

it; whether they are concerning the nature of God, or a future State, or his own Nature and Office, and Mediation. Thus *Philip* preached Christ to the *Samaritanes*, *Acts* 8. 5. which in *Verse* 12. is called *preaching the things concerning the Kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ.* That is the whole Doctrine of the Gospel.

This should make all considering men ashamed of those unreasonable and groundless clamours, that Christ is not preached, unless he be named in every sentence, whether the argument require it or not; as if *preaching Christ* were to be understood in a literal sense of preaching nothing, but *the name of Christ*: those preach Christ most, who are careful to confirm men in the belief of the Gospel, and of that great promise of immortal life, who expound his Laws, and the true nature and design of his Mediation; for every part of the Gospel is part of the Knowledge of Christ, and his Laws as principal a part as any, because the design of the whole Gospel is to make us obedient to these Eternal Rules of Righteousness, whereby we are transformed into the nature and Image of God,

and qualified for the happineſs of Heaven.

There is indeed a larger notion of the Knowledge of God and Chriſt, which includes the vertue and efficacy of this knowledge: for the deſign of all Religious knowledge being the Government of our lives and actions, how true ſoever our ſpeculations are, the Scripture brands all thoſe as ignorant of God, who do not love, and reverence, and obey him: and though we be acquainted with the whole Doctrine of the Goſpel, unleſs we heartily believe it, and obey all thoſe Revelations Chriſt hath made, we know him not: *John* 1. 2, 3. *Hereby we know, that we know him, if we keep his Commandments.* And *Verſe* 4. *He that ſaith, I know him and keepeth not his Commandments is a lyar, and the truth is not in him.* And 1 *John* 3.6. *Whoſoever abideth in him ſinneth not, whoſoever ſinneth hath not ſeen him, neither known him.* Not but that bad men may have as true a ſpeculative knowledge of the nature and deſign of the Goſpel, as good men have, but the meaning is, that this is a knowledge, which ſerves no end, which wants life and ſenſe, and makes

makes men no better, than if they were perfectly ignorant; and therefore is of no other account with God, than ignorance, unleſs it be to aggravate their ſins, and their condemnation.

SECT. II.

Of acquaintance with the Perſon of Chriſt.

AFter this plain account wherein the Knowledge of Chriſt conſiſts, the ſum of which is, that to know Chriſt is to underſtand his Goſpel, which contains all thoſe revelations he made of God's will, it will be neceſſary to examine another notion of the Knowledge of Chriſt very diſtinct from this, which contains a greater ſecret, than at firſt one would imagine, and that is an *acquaintance with the Perſon of Chriſt*, which if we will believe ſome men, is the only fountain of ſaving knowledge.

I ſhall not envy the Author the

glory of this discovery, and therefore shall honestly confess, where I had it, *viz.* in a Book Entitled, *Communion with God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost each Person distinctly.* Written by *John Owen*, D. D. And that I may not do this Author wrong, I must tell you, what he means by *acquaintance with Christ's Person*, an account of which we have in *digression* 2. *pag.* 87. *of the excellency of Christ Jesus.* Where he tells us, that *Christ is not only the Wisdom of God, but made wisdom to us, not only by teaching us wisdom* (that is by the Doctrines he preached, and those revelations he hath made of God's will) *as he is the great Prophet of the Church, but also because by the knowing of him, we become acquainted with the wisdom of God, which is our wisdom.* To which purpose he applies that Text, which speaks of the Doctrines and Revelations of Christ, to his Person. *Coll.* 2. 3. *For in him dwell all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge.* So that our acquaintance with Christ's Person, in this man's Divinity, signifies such a knowledge of what Christ is, hath done, and suffered for us, from whence we may learn

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thoſe greater, deeper, and more ſaving Myſteries of the Goſpel, which Chriſt hath not expreſly revealed to us: for ſo he adds ſoon after, *that theſe properties of God* (his pardoning mercy, *&c.*) *Chriſt hath revealed in his Doctrine, in that revelation he hath made of God and his will, but the life of this knowledge lies in an acquaintance with his Perſon, wherein the expreſs image and beams of this glory of his Father doth ſhine forth:* that is, that theſe things *are clearly, eminently, and ſavingly, only to be diſcovered in Jeſus Chriſt*; as he explains himſelf. So that it ſeems, the Goſpel of Chriſt makes a very imperfect and obſcure diſcovery of the nature, and Attributes, and will of God, and the methods of our recovery; we may thoroughly underſtand whatever is revealed in the Goſpel, and yet not have a *clear* and *ſaving knowledge* of theſe things, unleſs we gain a more intimate acquaintance with the *Perſon of Chriſt*. This indeed advances the *Perſon of Chriſt* very much, but is no great commendation of his Goſpel, and prophetick office: It ſets up a new rule of Faith

above the Gospel, *viz.* an acquaintance with Christ's Person, in whom *dwell all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.*

But that you may better understand the whole mystery of this *Acquaintance with the Person of Christ:* I shall first show you what additions these men make to the Gospel of Christ from an acquaintance with his Person; and secondly, show you what an unsafe way of arguing this is, and how prejudicial to the Christian Religion. First, to show you what additions these men make to the Gospel of Christ from an acquaintance with his Person. And I confess, I am very much beholden to this Author for acknowledging whence they fetch all their *Orthodoxy*, and *Gospel Mysteries*; for I had almost pored my eyes out with seeking for them in the Gospel, and could never find them; but I learn now, that indeed they are not to be found there, unless we be first acquainted with the *Person of Christ.* This is an argument well worth considering, and if this discourse should prove long (as I fear it will) I doubt not, but the usefulness

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of it will be a sufficient reward both to the Writer and Reader. And since I owe this discovery to Dr. *John Owen*, I shall confine my self to his method, who in the place above-mentioned tells us, that *the sum of all true wisdom and knowledge may be reduced to these three heads.* Digr. 2. Of the Excellency of Christ Jesus. p. 89

First, The knowledge of God, his nature and properties.

Secondly, The knowledge of our selves with reference to the will of God concerning us.

Thirdly, Skill to walk in Communion with God. In these three is summed up all true wisdom and knowledge, and not any of them is to any purpose to be obtained, or is manifested; but only in and by the Lord Christ.

Where *By* is fallaciously added to include the Revelations Christ hath made, whereas his first undertaking was to show how impossible it is to understand these things *savingly* and *clearly*, notwithstanding all those Revelations God hath made of himself and his will by *Moses*, and the Prophets, and by Christ himself, without an acquaintance with his Person.

But to let that pass, I shall begin with the

the knowledge of God, his nature and properties; and I shall not particularly examine every thing, he says, but principally take notice of those peculiar discoveries of the nature of God, which the World was ignorant of before, and of which Revelation is wholly silent, but are now *clearly* and *savingly* learnt from an *Acquaintance with Christ's Person.*

The light of nature and the works of Creation and Providence, and those manifold Revelations God hath made of himself to the World, especially that last and most perfect Revelation by *Jesus Christ our Lord*; assure us, that God is infinite in all perfections; that he is so powerful, that he can do whatever he pleases; so wise, that he knows how to order every thing for the best; so good, that he desires and designs the happiness of all his Creatures according to the capacity of their natures; so holy, that he hath a natural love for all good men, and will not fail to reward them; but hates all sin and wickedness, and will as certainly punish all obstinate and incorrigible Sinners; but yet that he is very patient and long-suffering towards the worst

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of men, and uſes various methods of kindneſs and ſeverity to reclaim them, and is as ready to pardon them, when they return to their duty, as a kind Father is to receive an humble and penitent Prodigal: Theſe properties of God are plainly revealed in the Scripture without any further acquaintance with the Perſon of Chriſt; And had Chriſt never appeared in the World, yet we had reaſon to believe, that God is thus wiſe, and good, and holy, and merciful, becauſe not only the works of Nature and Providence, but the word of God, aſſure us, that he is ſo; the Appearance of Chriſt did not firſt diſcover the nature of God to us, but only gave us a greater expreſſion of God's goodneſs, than ever we had before; confirms us in the belief of what we had learnt before from nature, and Revelation, juſt as his Reſurrection, which is an ocular demonſtration of another life, confirms us in the belief of that bleſſed Immortality, he had promiſed; and yet we could not have learnt this neither from the Perſon of Chriſt, had he not told us, for what ends he came into the World, as will appear more anon.

And

And is not this a confident man to tell us, that the *love of God to Sinners, and his pardoning mercy could never have entred into the heart of man but by Christ*; when the experience of the whole World confutes him; for whatever becomes of his new Theories, both Jews and Heathens (who understood nothing at all of what Christ was to do in order to our recovery) did believe God to be gracious and merciful to Sinners, and had reason to do so, because God himself had assured the Jews, *that he was a gracious and merciful God, pardoning iniquity, transgressions and sins.* And those natural notions the Heathens had of God, and all those discoveries God had made of himself in the works of Creation and Providence, did assure them, that God is very good, and it is not possible to understand what goodness is without pardoning Grace.

L. 2. p. 50.

But yet the truth is, considering what these men mean by the love and pardoning Grace, and Justice, and Patience, and Long-suffering of God, I must acknowledge, that these properties could never have been discovered but by a too familiar acquaintance with

with Christ's Person; for Nature and Revelation say nothing of them;

As for Instance, he tells us, that in Christ (that is in his death and sufferings for our sins) *God hath manifested the naturalness of this Righteousness* (*i. e.* vindictive justice in punishing sin) *unto him, in that it was impossible, that it should be diverted from Sinners without the interposing of a propitiation.* That is, that God is so just and righteous, that he cannot pardon sin without satisfaction to his justice: now this indeed is such a notion of justice, as is perfectly new, which neither Scripture nor nature acquaints us with: for all mankind have accounted it an Act of goodness (without the least suspition of injustice in it) to remit injuries and offences, without exacting any punishment: And that *he* is so far from being just, that he is cruel and savage, who will remit no offence, till he hath satisfied his revenge. That part of justice, which consists in punishing offenders, was always lookt on as an Instrument of Government, and therefore the exacting or remitting punishment was referred to the wisdom of Governours, who might spare, or punish, Digr. 2. p. 93.

nish, as they saw reason for it, without being unjust in either, and therefore, had not one who pretends to so great and personal an Acquaintance with Christ said so, I should rather have thought, that God's requiring such a Sacrifice, as the death of Christ, for the expiation of our sins was not, because he could not do otherwise, but because his Infinite Wisdom judged this the best and most effectual way of dispencing his Grace:

But though this be a very terrible discovery of the naturalness of Gods righteousness or vindictive justice, yet he makes some amends for it in that comfortable discovery of his patience and long-suffering towards Sinners; for now in Christ *the very nature of God is discovered to be love and kindness:* a happy change this from all justice to all love! but how comes this to pass? why the account of that is very plain: because the justice of God hath glutted its self with revenge on sin in the death of Christ, and so hence forward we may be sure he will be very kind, as a revengful man is when his passion is over; for so he speaks very honourably of God, *whatever discoveries were made*

Ibid. p. 95.

made of the Patience and lenity of God unto us, yet if it were not withal revealed, that the other properties of God, as his Justice and Revenge for sin, had their actings also assigned them to the full, there could be little consolation gathered from the former. That is, he would not believe God himself, though he should make never so many promises of being good and gracious to Sinners, unless he were sure, that he had first satisfied his revenge; which indeed is such a Character of the Love and Patience of God, as we could never have understood, but from an intimate acquaintance with the Person of Christ. The sum of which is, that God is all love and Patience, when he hath taken his fill of revenge, as others use to say, *that the Devil is very good, when he is pleased.*

But however sinners have great reason to rejoice in it, when they consider the nature and end of God's Patience and forbearance towards them, *viz.* That *it is Gods taking a course in his infinite wisdom and goodness, that we should not be destroyed notwithstanding our sins.* That as before the least sin could not escape without a just punishment, *Ib. p. 97.*

niſhment, juſtice being ſo natural to God, that he cannot forgive without puniſhing; ſo the juſtice of God being now ſatisfied by the death of Chriſt, the greateſt ſins can do us no hurt; but we ſhall eſcape with a *Notwithſtanding our ſins.* This it ſeems we learn from an acquaintance with the Perſon of Chriſt, though his Goſpel inſtructs us otherwiſe, that *without holineſs no man ſhall ſee God.*

As for the *Wiſdom of God* (which is another property he inſtanceth in) no doubt, but the Goſpel of Chriſt makes great and glorious diſcoveries of it, but then this is not very conſiſtent with thoſe other diſcoveries of the nature of God: for if juſtice be ſo natural to God, that nothing could ſatisfie him but the death of his own Son, the redemption of the World by Chriſt may diſcover his juſtice, or his goodneſs, but not his Wiſdom; for Wiſdom conſiſts in the choice of the beſt and fitteſt means to attain an end, when there are more ways, than one of doing it.

But it requires no great Wiſdom to chuſe, when there is but one poſſible way: and whatever Wiſdom there is in

in Gods redeeming the World by his own Son, the knowledge of it is wholly owing to the Revelations of the Gospel, not to such a fanciful acquaintance with Christ as these men talk of:

Thus you see what excellent discoveries of the Nature of God are owing to an acquaintance with the Person of Christ; And the second thing we learn from hence is the knowledge of our selves, and that in respect of Sin, and in respect of Righteousness.

As for sin, the Gospel assures us, that God is an irreconcileable Enemy to all wickedness, it being so contrary to his own most holy Nature, that if he have any love for himself, and any esteem and value for his own perfections, and works, he must hate sin, which is so unlike himself, and which destroys the beauty and perfection of his Workmanship. For this end he sent his Son into the World to destroy the works of the Devil, and to reduce Mankind to their obedience, to their great Creator, to restore them to the uprightness and integrity of their natures, and thereby to a state of friendship with God: This was the end of

his holy Laws and precious Promises, and exemplary Life, and meritorious Death, and glorious Resurrection, and powerful Intercession for us, to deliver us from the Power and Dominion of Sin, to make us first holy, as God is, and then to receive us into that Blessed place, where God dwells.

But now acquaintance with the Person of Christ makes just such a discovery of sin, as it did of the naturalness of God's Justice to him; *i. e.* that the desert and demerit of sin is such, that it is impossible to make any atonement or satisfaction to the justice and wrath of God, but only by the Death of Christ, otherwise Christ had died in vain: that is, that God could not forgive it without full satisfaction, which nothing but the Death of Christ could make.

P. 110. Thus we learn *our disability to answer the mind and will of God in all or any of the obedience he requireth*: that is, that it is impossible for us to do any thing that is good, but we must be acted like Machines by an external force, by the irresistable power of the Grace and Spirit of God; this I am sure is a new discovery; we learn no such

such thing from the Gospel, and I do not see, how he proves it from an acquaintance with Christ.

But still there is a more glorious discovery than this behind, and that is, *the glorious end whereunto sin is appointed and ordained* (I suppose he means by God) *is discovered in Christ, viz.* for the *demonstration of Gods vindictive justice in measuring out to it a meet recompence of reward, and for the praise of God's glorious grace in the pardon and forgiveness of it.* That is, it could not be known, how just and severe God is, but by punishing sin, nor how good and gracious God is, but by pardoning it, and therefore lest his justice and mercy should never be known to the World, he appoints and ordains sin to this end, that is Decrees, that men shall sin, that he may make some of them the Vessels of his wrath, and the examples of his fierce vengeance and displeasure, and others the Vessels of his mercy to the praise and glory of his free Grace in Christ? this indeed is such a discovery, as nature and revelation could not make. For nature would teach us, that so infinitely a glorious Being, as God is, needs P. 112.

not sin and misery to recommend his glory and perfections, and that so holy a God, who so perfectly hates every thing, that is wicked; would not truckle and barter with Sin and the Devil for his glory. And that so good a God had much rather be glorious in the happiness, and perfection, and obedience of his Creatures, than in their sin and misery: and Revelation tells us the same thing, that as much as sin is for the glory of his vindictive justice, yet God takes no pleasure in punishing, delights not in the Death of a Sinner, but rather that he should return and live: that is, he had rather there were no occasion for punishing, than be made glorious by such acts of vengeance: and therefore though God be so holy as to punish incorrigible Sinners, and so merciful, as to forgive all true Penitents through our Lord Jesus Christ, yet he did not ordain, and appoint, and decree sin to this end: for vindictive justice and pardoning mercy are but secondary Attributes of the Divine Nature, and therefore God cannot primarily design the glorifying of them; for that cannot be without primarily designing the

the ſin and miſery of his Creatures, which would be inconſiſtent with the goodneſs and holineſs of his Nature. Thus Nature and Revelation teaches, though theſe men pretend to have learn't otherwiſe from an acquaintance with Chriſt.

Thus much for the knowledge of our ſelves with reſpect to ſin, *which is hid only in the Lord Jeſus.* But then we learn what our righteouſneſs is, wherewith we muſt appear before God from an acquaintance with Chriſt. We have already learnt, how unable we are to make atonement for our ſins, without which they can never be forgiven, and how unable we are to do any thing that is good: and yet nothing can deliver us from the juſtice and wrath of God, but a full ſatisfaction for our ſins, and nothing can give us a title to a reward, but a perfect and unſinning righteouſneſs; what ſhall we do in this Caſe? how ſhall we eſcape Hell, or get to Heaven, when we can neither expiate for our paſt ſins, nor do any good for the time to come? why here we are relieved again by an acquaintance with Chriſt: his Death expiates former iniquities, and

removes the whole guilt of sin: but *this is not enough, that we are not guilty; we must also be actually righteous; not only all sin is to be answered for, but all righteousness is to be fulfilled.* Now this righteousness we find only in Christ,

P. 117. *We are reconciled to God by his Death, and saved by his life, that actual obedience he yielded to the whole law of God, is that righteousness, whereby we are saved:* we are innocent by vertue of his Sacrifice and expiation, and righteous with his righteousness.

Now this is a mighty comfortable discovery, how we may be righteous without doing any thing that is good, or righteous. And I confess we could never have known this but by an acquaintance with his Person; for his Gospel makes a different representation of it; tells us expressly, that he is righteous, who doth righteousness, that without holiness no man shall see God: that the only way to obtain the pardon of our sins is to repent of them, and forsake them; and the only thing that gives a right to the promises of future glory, is to obey the Laws, and imitate the example of our Saviour, and to be transformed into the nature

and

and likeneſs of God: and though our obedience be not in every thing exact and perfect, if it be ſincere, we ſhall be accepted for the ſake of Chriſt, and by vertue of that Covenant of Grace, which he hath ſealed with his blood, which admits of an Evangelical, inſtead of a ſtrict legal perfection: ſuch different diſcoveries doth an acquaintance with the Goſpel, and with the Perſon of Chriſt, make.

The third part of our Wiſdom is to walk with God, and to that is required, *Agreement, acquaintance, a way, ſtrength, boldneſs, and aiming at the ſame end: and all theſe with the Wiſdom of them are hid in the Lord Jeſus.* The ſum of which in ſhort is this, that Chriſt having expiated our ſins, and fulfilled all righteouſneſs for us, though we have no perſonal righteouſneſs of our own, but are as contrary to God, as darkneſs is to light, and death to life, and an univerſal pollution and defilement to an univerſal and glorious holineſs, and hatred to love; yet the righteouſneſs of Chriſt is a ſufficient, nay the only foundation of our agreement, and upon that, of our walking with God: though St. *John* tells us, *If we ſay we* Dig. 2. p. 119.

have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness we lye, and do not the truth, but if we walk in the light, as God is in the light, then have we fellowship one with another, and (then) *the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sins. John* 1. *Ch.* 1. *v.* 6, 7. And our only acquaintance with God and knowledge of him is hid in Christ, which his word and works could not discover, as you heard above. And he is the only way, wherein we must walk with God, and we receive all our strength from him; and he makes us bold and confident too, having removed the guilt of sin, that now we may look Justice in the face, and *whet our Knife at the Counter door*, all our Debts being discharged by Christ, as these bold acquaintance and familiars of Christ use to speak. And in Christ we design the same end that God doth, which is the *advancement of his own glory*: that is, I suppose, by trusting to the expiation and righteousness of Christ for Salvation, without doing any thing our selves, we take care that God shall not be robbed of the glory of his free Grace by a competition of any merits and deserts of our own:

These are those great *Gospel Mysteries and Soul-saving truths*, which are learnt from an acquaintance with Christ's Person, which his Gospel is so silent in, or speaks so darkly and imperfectly of, that it was impossible to understand them, without being first acquainted with his Person. And that you may the better understand the whole design and contrivance of it, I shall put every thing into its just and natural order;

God then from the beginning designed to glorifie his justice, and his mercy, and because there had been no occasion either to punish or pardon, unless man had sinned, he *appointed and ordained sin for the glory of his vindictive justice and pardoning Grace*: and accordingly (since nothing can withstand the Decrees and appointments of God) it pleaseth God that Man should sin; but when he hath sinned he is extreamly displeased with it, and now his Justice must be satisfied; for it is impossible for God to forgive the the least sin without a compleat and perfect satisfaction; this falls hard upon those miserable wretches, whose ill fortune it was, without any faults of theirs,

theirs, to be left out of the Roll of Election, and who have no way to satisfie the Divine Justice, but by their Eternal Torments; by this it appears, how rigorously just God is, that he will never pardon the least sin, when he can serve his own glory by the misery and confusion of Sinners:

But this is but one part of the glory of God, to be just in punishing sin, the other is to shew mercy in sparing and rewarding the Sinner; now here was the great difficulty, how God should be just, and merciful too, when Justice requires a full satisfaction, and mercy excludes all desert. For the demerit of sin being infinite, no Creature can expiate sin, but by enduring infinite, that is endless Torments; and those who must be always miserable, can never be the subjects of God's mercy.

To unite these two extreams, and reconcile such contradictions, was a work of infinite Wisdom, as well as goodness; And it was effected thus. God sends his only begotten Son our Lord Jesus Christ into the World to fulfil all righteousness in his life, and to make a full satisfaction for sin by his Death.

Death. For his blood being of infinite value (as being the blood of the Son of God) could expiate an infinite guilt, and so make a compleat satisfaction to Justice; which is more glorified by the Death of Christ, than by the Eternal miseries of all the Sinners in the World, because it discovers the naturalness of Justice to God (which is the *Position* to be maintain'd) that he could not pardon without full satisfaction, that is, that he is so just, that he hath not one dram of goodness in him, till his rage and vengeance be satisfied; which is I confess a glorious kind of Justice:

But now *the Justice and vengeance of God having their actings assigned them to the full*, being glutted and satiated with the blood of Christ; God may pardon as many and great sins, as he pleases, without fear of the least imputation of injustice: and now a glorious and more comfortable Scene of mercy begins to appear; now God embraces Sinners, as a kind Father, and accounts them perfectly innocent in vertue of that satisfaction Christ hath made for their sins; but this is not enough, the law of God must be fulfilled,

filled, as well as his justice satisfied, we must be righteous, as well as innocent, otherwise we may escape punishment, but can expect no reward (though I confess, I should have thought, that Christ had satisfied for sins of omission, together with sins of Commission: and as by his satisfaction for our doing, what we ought not to do, we are reputed by God as having never done any thing amiss, so by his satisfaction for our neglecting what we ought to have done, we might by the same reason be reputed by God perfectly righteous, to have done all, that we ought, to have kept the whole Law, but it seems this was not sufficient) and therefore as the satisfaction of Christ is imputed to us for the forgiveness of sins, so the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us to make us perfectly righteous; and this makes the Grace of God perfectly free without any suspition of merit or desert in us.

And now God and Sinners may agree very well and walk comfortably together, for though *they* have guilt enough, and *he* Justice enough to destroy a World, yet there is no danger,

ger, ſince Chriſt hath ſatisfied Juſtice; and though he be infinitely holy and pure, perfect light, and Sinners abominably filthy, yet there is no fear he ſhould loath and abhor them, when they are Cloathed with the white and ſpotleſs Robes of Chriſts righteouſneſs; and they are ſo well acquainted now with the deſign of God to advance the glory of his free Grace in their Salvation, that they are very ſecure, that neither their paſt ſins, nor preſent habitual impurities can do them any hurt: but they *ſhall be ſaved with a notwithſtanding their ſins.*

Theſe are thoſe fundamental Doctrines, with which theſe men have bleſſed the World from a pretended acquaintance with Chriſt's Perſon, which are ſo unlike the *holy Religion of our Saviour*, that for diſtinction ſake, it ought to be called the *Religion of Chriſt's Perſon*, in oppoſition to the Religion of his Goſpel.

And ſince we have diſcovered the Principles of this new Religion of Chriſt's Perſon, I cannot forbear inquiring briefly into the practical inferences from it, that we may at once view the grand Myſtery of this Religion

gion both in its principles and practice.

Now the practice of this Religion consists in accepting of Christ, and coming to him, and applying his merits and satisfaction, and righteousness to our selves, for pardon and justification; and in those duties which are consequent upon such an Union and closure with Christ. For Christ having satisfied for our sins, and fulfilled the righteousness of the law for us, it is a plain and necessary consequence, that we have nothing to do, but to get an interest in the satisfaction and righteousness of Christ, that they may be imputed to us; for he is very ignorant of Christ, who hopes that any thing else will avail him to Salvation.

Now that we may thus come to Christ and close with him, it is absolutely necessary, that we be sensible of our lost and undone condition out of Christ. How impossible it is for us to atone the wrath of God, or to have any righteousness of our own, which can bear the severe scrutiny of his justice; and in a sence of this we must work our imagination and fancy into great terrours and agonies, and a dismal

mal fear of the unsupportable wrath of God, and his natural and inexorable justice: this is the spirit of bondage, which we must lie under, before we can attain to the Spirit of Adoption: for we shall never value and prize Christ, and go to him for Salvation, till we are convinc't of our necessity of him, and driven to him by the threatnings and terrours of the Law; and the promise of ease and rest, is made only to the weary and heavy laden; and these only shall be satisfied, who hunger and thirst after the imputed righteousness of Christ.

And now being thus stung with sin, it is time for us to look up to Christ, as the *Israelites* did on the brazen Serpent, that we may be healed; now we must begin to see his fulness and perfection and suitableness to the wants and necessities of our Souls, that he is our atonement and expiation, our wisdom and righteousness, all that we can desire or need.

And if it should so happen, that the sense of our sins and unworthiness makes us afraid to come to Christ, and apply him to our Souls, we must then have recourse to our acquaintance with

with the Person of Christ, to answer all our doubts, and quiet our Consciences. As for instance, *Dost thou object I am a great Sinner, and will Christ save me?* the Answer is easie, *whom did Christ come to save? whom doth God justifie but the ungodly? did he take our flesh upon him, and not our sins? ballance all things together, your sins and Christs merits together, and the greatness of your sins should not so much discourage you from coming to Christ, as the greatness of his merits should encourage you to come to him. For where sin abounded, Grace did much more abound. Compare your distress and Christ's compassion together, your wants and Christ's fulness together, your unworthiness and Christ's freeness together, your desires and Christ's invitations together, your own weakness and Christ's strength together, Satan's objections and Christ's answers together*; and now if Christ do not prevail above all thy fears, thou art not worthy to be acquainted with him.

Shepards sound Believer p. 80.

Nay further, *if thou objectest, what have I to do with Christ? why should he have to do with me; who have such an unholy, vile, hard, blind, and most wicked heart?*

heart? (the objection you see is full and home to the purpose, but mark the answer) *O! for the Lord's sake dishonour not the Grace of Christ, it is true, thou canst not come to Christ, till thou art laden, humble, and separated from thy sins --- yet remember for ever, that no more sorrow for sin, no more separation from sin, is necessary to thy closing with Christ, than so much, as makes thee willing, or rather not unwilling, that the Lord should take it away; and know, if thou seekest for a greater measure of humiliation, antecedent to thy closing with Christ, than this, thou showest the more pride therein, who wilt rather go into thy self to make thy self holy and humble, that thou maist be worthy of Christ, than go out of thy self unto the Lord Jesus to take away thy sin; In a word, who thinkest, Christ cannot love thee, until thou makest thy self fair, and when thou thinkest thy self so (which is pride) wilt thou think otherwise of Christ.*

And now the reason of all this is very plain from our acquaintance with Christ; for he is our Physician, and therefore we must not think of healing our selves, but must go to him with all

our Diseases and Sores about us, that he alone may have the honour of healing us. He is a Fountain set open for sin and for uncleanness, and therefore we must go to him with all our filthiness to be cleansed and washed, for if we be first clean, there is no need of a Fountain. He is all fulness, and therefore it is not fit we should carry any thing to him, as if he needed any thing from us. He is our Righteousness, and therefore if we have any, we must leave all our righteousness behind us, when we go to him. He is all beauty and loveliness, and therefore we must not carry any beauty to him, but receive it all from him; So that all we have to do in this great work, is to go to Christ weary, and sick, and filthy, and naked, stript of every thing, but our sins and impurities, to receive ease and health, and fulness, and beauty from him. Christ is the gift of God, and therefore we must only receive him by the hand of Faith, and apply him to our Souls, and then what a blessed change and Metamorphosis is there presently made in us! for though we continue as we were, yet we have all in Christ. We

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are now united to him, and made his Members and Spouse, and so have an interest in all his merits and fulness. * *Christ saith to a believer with my body, yea with my blood I endowe thee, and a Believer saith to Christ, with my Soul I thee worship* (as if Christ and a Believer were marryed by the Liturgy.) And now a Sinner may with the greatest confidence look Justice in the face, as being out of its reach. *A Soul in Christ is actually united to him, and One with him, and being so, no sentence of condemnation can fall on him, but the same must light upon Christ himself,* (and who would desire to be more secure than Christ is) *as a Woman in marriage, though she owe never so many debts, yet the arrest doth not light upon her, but upon her Husband:* O blessed priviledge! and who would be afraid of running into debt with God, when he hath such a Husband to discharge all. And then how vile and impure soever men are, *here is their comfort when they are marryed to Christ, this is their glorious priviledge, Christ's beauty and loveliness shall be put upon them; his lilly whiteness shall be put upon the Saints.* And to Crown all, when they are once

* *Watson's Christs Loveliness. pag. 462.*

Watson's Christs Loveliness. p. 467.

thus engrafted into Christ, and made his Spouse, and Members of his body, they are secure to Eternity. *For nothing that ever was a Member, can be lost to Eternity; for is Christ divided? can he lose a Member of his body? then his body is not perfect. No, no, fear not O ye Saints, neither sin, nor Satan, can dissolve your Union with Christ* (but what if sin should make them no Saints, would not that endanger the dissolveing of this Union?) For as the same Author sweetly reasons, *if any branch be pluckt away from Christ, it is either because Christ is not able to keep it, or because he is willing to lose it* (and why not, because it will not stay?) *he is able surely to keep it, for he is strengthned with the Godhead, and he is not willing to lose it; for why then should he shed his bloud for it.* And as another great acquaintance of Christs speaks, *Weakness* (that is *no strength, no Grace, no nor so much as sense of poverty*) *do not debar us from God's mercy*, and the reason is very precious and convincing; *for the Husband is bound to bear with the Wife as the weaker Vessel, and shall we think God will exempt himself from his own Rules, and not bear with his*

Watson's Christian Character, p. 60.

The Spiritual Vine. p. 167.

Shepards sincere Convert. p. 77.

his weak Spouſe. Chriſt hath taken upon him to purge his Spouſe, and make her fit for himſelf; ſo that if ſhe be not purged, and cleanſed, and made fair and lovely, whoſe fault can it be but his own, and ſurely that can be no juſt reaſon for a divorce. Thus you ſee, what it is to come to Chriſt, and accept of him, and cloſe with him; the reſult of which is (ſo far as I can underſtand it) to be content to be ſaved by Chriſt without being either humble or holy, fair or beautiful, any otherwiſe, than as he is pleaſed to make us ſo, by his ſatisfaction for our ſins, and the imputation of his righteouſneſs to us.

Let us now conſider what duties are conſequent upon ſuch a union and cloſure of the Soul with Chriſt, and they are *conſequential, conjugal affections.* As firſt a mighty love for her Saviour, and head, and Huſband: the Soul muſt be enamoured with the beauty, and lovelineſs, and preciouſneſs of Chriſt, muſt form pleaſant and charming ideas of him, and feel great raviſhments and tranſports of paſſion for him: *You muſt be ſick of love to Chriſt, O ye Saints! and let him lye as a bundle of Myrrhe al-*

Watson's Christs Loveliness. p. 462.

ways between your Breasts; Christ is maximè diligibilis (as the Schoolmen speak) he is the very abstract and Quintessence of beauty, he is a whole Paradise of delight, he is the flower of Sharon *enriched with orient Colours, and perfumed with the sweetest savour, O wear this flower not in your bosoms, but in your hearts, and be always smelling to it, and show your love to this lovely Saviour.* You must delight in his embraces, and thirst after a more intimate acquaintance with him, you must never be satisfied one moment without him, but must follow him from one Ordinance to another, and never be satisfied unless you meet with Christ, and enjoy Communion with him in Ordinances: this is the Foundation of the Saints love to Ordinances, that there they meet with the beloved of their Souls, and enjoy the sweet caresses and endearments of his love; there they hear of his beauty, and loveliness, and riches, and fulness, and alsufficiency, and though *Evangelical truths will not down with a natural heart, such an one had rather hear some quaint point of some vertue or vice stood upon, than any thing in Christ, yet when the Grace*

Grace of God hath altered him, than of all truths the truths of Christ savour best, those truths that come out of the mouth of Christ, and out of the Ministry concerning Christ, they are most sweet of all. Such sanctified Souls and Ears loath all dull, insipid, moral discourses, which are perpetually inculcating their duty on them, and troubling them with a great many rules and directions for a good life; which he is pleas'd to call the *quaint Points of Vertue and Vice*; for this is not to enjoy *Christ in Ordinances*, they go away from such entertainment without having met with the beloved of their Soul, without hearing any news from him, or having the least glympse of his beauty and perfections; which is a plain contradiction to the nature and design of Ordinances, which are only for our enjoyment of Communion with Jesus Christ. That is, to unload our Consciences, and disburden our sins on him in our Confessions, and to beg of him the imputation of his righteousness to make us lovely, and to put our Souls into some raptures, and amorous passions to him, and to hear some good news from him by his Ministers, how

much he loves us, and longs after us, how pittiful he is to us, ready to overlook all our miscarriages, and cover all our deformities with his own beauty and lovelineſs, and to take us to the enjoyment of himſelf, that where he is, we alſo may be, perpetually to behold his glory, and ſolace our ſelves in his love:

Secondly, another conſequential conjugal Act is obedience to our ſpiritual Huſband, a duty which few Wives care for, and the truth is, though the Goſpel of Chriſt be very plain and expreſs in exacting this from them, and inculcates it ſo much, that it ſavours too ſtrong of a legal ſpirit and diſpenſation, yet it is very hard to find a proper place for it in this new Religion, or to deduce it from an acquaintance with Chriſts Perſon.

For this is not neceſſary at all to our coming to Chriſt, and cloſing with him, nay it is a great hindrance to it, for we muſt bring nothing to Chriſt with us, the marriage is conſummated without it, and then we have leſs need of it than before; for then we are adorned with the beauty of Chriſt, are holy with his holineſs, we are delivered from

from the guilt of ſin by his expiation, he muſt look to it to ſee the debt diſcharged, which he hath now taken upon himſelf, and we are righteous with his righteouſneſs, which gives us an actual right to glory, and we need no righteouſneſs of our own to ſave us, which were to ſuppoſe a defect in the righteouſneſs of Chriſt; ſo that, how obedience ſhould come in, is hard to ſay. It is concluded on all hands by thoſe, who are moſt intimately acquainted with the Perſon of Chriſt, that it is but a conſequential duty, that which ought to follow our Eſpouſals with Chriſt, and Juſtification by him, as a fruit and effect of it; but yet the reaſon of it is not evident. Some tell us, that it is due upon account of gratitude and thankfulneſs to our Saviour, which I cannot ſo well underſtand, unleſs our righteouſneſs and obedience be due to Chriſt in thankfulneſs to him for ſaving us without obedience and righteouſneſs, which is juſt as broad as long, and we get nothing by the bargain. Eſpecially conſidering that this is hardly reconcileable with that eſſential condition of accepting Chriſt, wherein theſe ſpiritual Eſpouſals conſiſt.

Viz.

J. O. Communion. p. 63.

Viz. That the Soul consents to take Christ on his own terms, to save him in his own way, and saith, Lord, I would have had thee and salvation in my way, that it might have been partly of mine endeavours, and as it were by the works of the Law (that is, by obeying the Laws of the Gospel) *but I am now willing to receive thee, and to be saved in thy way, meerly by Grace:* that is, without doing any thing, without obeying thee; the most contented Spouse certainly that ever was in the world, to submit to such hard conditions, as to be saved for nothing; but what a pretty complement doth the Soul make to Christ after all this, when she adds, *And though I would have walk't according to my own mind, yet now I wholly give up my self to be ruled by thy Spirit.* But the mystery of this will appear in what follows: for others make obedience necessary upon account of our participation of Christs fulness, for this is one part of his fulness, a power and ability to do the will of God, and this proves that it will be so, but makes it no otherwise necessary to us, than as we are necessarily passive in it, and this is all the Soul means in giving

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it ſelf up to be ruled by the ſpirit of Chriſt, to be paſſively, not actively good, to ſubmit (as needs it muſt) to the irreſiſtible working of the Divine Spirit, and to obey, when it can rebel no longer.

Thus, Reader, I have given thee an entire Scheme of a new Religion, reſulting from an acquaintance with Chriſt's Perſon, in all its fundamental Principles, and practices; here is every jot and tittle of reaſon, it is founded on, or pretends to, and the moſt obvious and eaſie connexion of one part with another, whereby thou maiſt eaſily judge of the whole fabrick and contrivance; and I think there needs no more to expoſe it to the ſcorn of every conſidering man, who cannot but diſcover, how inconſiſtent the Religion of Chriſt's Perſon, and of his Goſpel are: this is that knowledge of Chriſt theſe men glory in, as containing greater Myſteries and more Soul-ſaving truths, than are revealed in the Goſpel.

SECT.

SECT. III.

How unsafe it is to found Religion upon a pretended acquaintance with Christ's Person.

HAving thus shewed you what that Religion is, which these men pretend to learn from an acquaintance with Christ's Person, it is time now to consider this way of Reasoning, and shew you what an unsafe foundation it is to build any Religion on.

And first, this is at best to build Religion upon uncertain conjectures, or ambiguous and doubtful reasons; for suppose men were wary and cautious in drawing conclusions from the Person of Christ, (which few of these men are) yet what assurance can they have, that their inferences are true: Had we seen Christ in the flesh, and been witnesses of the many miracles he wrought, of his Death upon the Cross, and his resurrection from the dead, had he not acquainted us with the end and design of all this, we might have guest, and guest, till we had been weary, but

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it is great odds we had never gueſt right, or at beſt could never have been ſecure we had.

We may underſtand neceſſary cauſes from neceſſary effects, and neceſſary effects from neceſſary cauſes; if we ſee a fire we know it burns ſomething, and if we ſee ſmoak, we may ſafely conclude, there is ſome fire; but where the connexion of the effect with the cauſe is not neceſſary, but arbitrary, doth not depend upon the nature of things, but the inſtitution and appointment of free Agents, we can underſtand no more of the deſign, than the principal Agent is pleaſed to tell us. This is the caſe here: Chriſts coming into the World, and all that he did and ſuffered for us, is the pure effect of God's free Grace, and the deſign of his unſearchable Wiſdom and Council, and therefore none can underſtand the reaſon and contrivance of this, but he who lay in the boſom of his Father, and thoſe who learn from him: ſo that whoever would underſtand the Religion of our Saviour muſt learn it from his Doctrine, not from his Perſon; becauſe there is not a natural and neceſſary connexion between the Perſon of Chriſt,

Christ, and what he did and suffered, and the Salvation of Mankind: the Incarnation, and Life, and Death, and Resurrection of Christ were available to those ends, for which God designed them, but the vertue and efficacy of them doth depend upon Gods institution and appointment, and therefore can be known only by Revelation.

When we are acquainted by Christ, for what end he came into the World, and suffered, and died, and rose again, we may discover the Wisdom and goodness of God in it, in sending us such a Saviour, and qualifying him in so excellent a manner for the work of our Redemption; but we cannot safely draw any one conclusion from the Person of Christ, which his Gospel hath not expresly taught, because we can know no more of the design of it, than what is there revealed.

And is it not intolerable presumption for men to mould and shape Religion according to their fancies and humours, and to stuff it with an infinite number of Orthodox propositions, none of which are to be found in expres terms in Scripture, but are only pretended to be deduced from thence by such

ſuch imaginary conſequences, from ſome little hints and appearances of things? Eſpecially, is not this unpardonable in thoſe men, who cry down reaſon for ſuch a prophane and carnal thing, as muſt not preſume to intermeddle in holy matters, and yet lay the foundation of their Religion, and erect ſuch glorious and magnificent Fabricks, on nothing elſe but ſome little ſhews and appearances of Reaſon? But the plain truth is this, when men argue from the nature of God, and his Works and Providences, from the nature of Mankind, and thoſe eternal notions of good and evil, and the eſſential differences of things, that is, when men argue from plain and undeniable Principles, which have an immutable and unchangeable nature, and ſo can bear the ſtreſs and weight of a juſt conſequence, this is carnal Reaſon; but when men argue from fancies and imaginations, which have no ſtable nature, from ſome pretty Alluſions, and Similitudes, and Allegories, which have no certain ſhape, nor form, but what every mans fancy gives them, this is ſanctified and ſpiritual reaſon, but why I cannot imagine, unleſs that

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it ſo much reſembles Ghoſts and ſhadows, which have nothing ſolid and ſubſtantial in them.

Secondly, How dangerous this way of reaſoning from an acquaintance with Chriſt's Perſon is, appears in this, that it will ſerve any mans turn, who hath any quickneſs and vigour of fancy. It is an eaſie matter at this rate to ſet up the trade of making new Hypotheſes of Religion. I have already given you one draught and Scheme of Religion from a pretended acquaintance with Chriſts Perſon, and it were eaſie to preſent you with many more, with as fair colours and pretences, and as exact and regular proportions, and fanciful conſequences, and artificial connexions; I need not tell you, what uſe all our Allegorical Divines would make of this, who have the peculiar knack and gift of adapting every ſimilitude and reſemblance, to what purpoſes they pleaſe: We know how the Valentinians of old perverted all the paſſages of our Saviours Life and Death by ſuch fanciful applications to confirm the doctrine of their *Æones*, and the portentous production of their Gods, and to patronize all their vileſt

practices

practices; and if we allow of this way, I know not, why one mans fancy ſhould not be admitted as well as anothers. But to ſhew how eaſily this acquaintance with Chriſt's Perſon may be made to ſerve different purpoſes, I ſhall oppoſe another Scheme of Religion, which is much more plainly deducible from an acquaintance with Chriſts Perſon, to what theſe men advance for the great Myſtery of the Goſpel, and the only ſpiritual Wiſdom; And thus I argue.

Since we ſee the Eternal Son of God leave his Fathers Throne, and condeſcend to come into the World in the nature and likeneſs of a man, we may certainly conclude, that it was upon a deſign of love and goodneſs; for had he intended to deſtroy the World, he would have Cloathed himſelf with thunder and lightning, he would have appeared like himſelf with an awful and aſtoniſhing Majeſty, and with all the terrible ſolemnities of vengeance and judgment, incircled with Legions of Angels, and with Clouds of ſmoak and fire: but we now ſee nothing dreadful in his looks, nor in his Converſation, he was made a Man, as we are,

which argues a good will and kindness to humane Nature, he had all the sweetness of innocence, and an obliging goodness, that we have no reason to suspect any ill design under so charming and inviting an appearance, his miracles were great and glorious, but not frightful and astonishing, they surprized with wonder, not with terrour and fear: his Almighty Power was displayed and manifested in methods of love and kindness, in healing the sick, and dispossessing Devils, in feeding the hungry, and raising the dead, not in over-turning Kingdoms and Empires, or bringing fire from Heaven to consume his Enemies. From all this we may safely conclude, that he came upon an Embassy of Peace, to assure the World of Gods good will towards them, and to reconcile the differences between God and Men.

And when we consider further, that this Heavenly Embassador and Mediator is no less than the Eternal Son of God, by whom the Worlds were made, we may reasonably conclude, that he came upon no less design, than of universal goodness, for he can have no temptation to partiality, as being equally

equally concerned in the happineſs of all men, and we cannot imagine, why he ſhould lay a narrower deſign of love in the redemption, than in the Creation of Mankind; that when in the firſt Creation he deſigned all men for happineſs, in this new and ſecond Creation, he ſhould deſign, and intend the happineſs only of ſome few, which is to make him leſs good in redeeming, than in creating Mankind, though Creation coſt him no more than the exerciſe of his power, but redemption the expence of his bloud: no ſure, his goodneſs did not become leſs infinite and boundleſs, when he became man; the deſign of his appearing was to reſtore Mankind to that honour, and happineſs, and immortality, they had loſt; and to repair the ſullied glory of the firſt Creation by making all things new again.

Thus when we conſider the innocence and holineſs of his life, that he was a great example of an unaffected piety towards God, and all the vertues of an innocent and uſeful Converſation with men, we may reaſonably conclude, that his great deſign was to reform the debaucht manners of the

World, to reduce Mankind to the obedience of God, to teach man how to live as well as talk, and to reſtore the practice of piety, and juſtice, of meekneſs, and humility, and an univerſal good will, which had been baniſhed out of the World by the Hypocritical pretences of a more refined ſanctity in waſhing hands and Diſhes, in tithing Mint and Cumming, and ſuch like pieces of legal and Ceremonial Righteouſneſs; But now our Saviour by his example as well as laws, taught us another Leſſon, that as we loſt our happineſs at firſt by ſin, ſo the way to regain the favour of God, and an immortal life, is by the practice of a ſincere and univerſal righteouſneſs. He came to be our example and guide to Heaven as well as our Mediator and Advocate, and therefore we muſt imitate his life, if we would enjoy the benefits of his Death and Interceſſion; for ſo holy a Perſon can never be the Patron of Vice, nor an Advocate for impenitent and incorrigible Sinners.

When we remember, that Chriſt died as a Sacrifice and propitiation for ſin, this gives us a great demonſtration of Gods good will to us, how ready he

he is to pass by all our former sins, in that he hath appointed an atonement for us, and given no less person, than his own Son, for our ransom, which is the greatest assurance God could give us of his readiness to accept of true Penitents, and therefore the most powerful motive and encouragement to return to our duty.

And besides this, the death of Christ assures us, what the desert of sin is, and what will be the portion of all impenitent Sinners: for in that he required the death of his own Son to be an atonement for sin, he hath plainly declared, that all Sinners deserve to die, and that none shall escape this just Condemnation, but those, who are washed and purifyed in the blood of Christ: He will not pardon sin without a Sacrifice, nor accept of any other atonement, but the death of his Son, and accept of that for none, but those, who believe and obey the Gospel; and if God did not think fit to save true Penitents without a ransom, where shall the Sinner and ungodly appear. So that though we do not pretend to understand the strict Philosophy of that atonement made by Christ, yet we may

eaſily learn all that is uſeful and neceſſary for us to know; that Chriſt's Death and Sacrifice for ſin Seals the Covenant of Grace and pardon to all penitent and reformed Sinners, and ſeals the irrevocable decree of Reprobation againſt all others; for that Covenant, which is ſealed with the blood of ſo great and ſtupendious a Sacrifice, muſt needs be irrevocable and Eternal.

In the Reſurrection of Chriſt from the dead, and his Aſcenſion into Heaven, we have an ocular demonſtration of the rewards of holineſs and obedience, that for the innocence and purity of his life, and the humility and obedience of his Death, he is now exalted to the right hand of God, and cloathed with Majeſty and Glory. That Power and Authority, he is now inveſted with, ſecures us of the prevalency of his interceſſion, of his conſtant care and providence over his Church, of the influences of his Grace, and the ſupply of all our ſpiritual wants, and of that glory and happineſs, to which he will advance us at the laſt day.

All this we learn from an acquaintance

tance with Christ's Person (as these men call it) and it were easie now to draw the whole plot and design of Christianity, to search into the deep Councils of God, and to discover those principles and motives, he was acted by, and the infinite Wisdom of the contrivance, and the true methods of a Sinners recovery by Christ, and what that homage and worship is, which we owe our Saviour.

As to make some short Essay of it. Those natural notions, which we have of God, acquaint us, that he is infinitely good, and the History of the Creation assures us, that God made the World to be an image and representation of his own glory and perfections, but especially Man, who was made after the image of God, and endowed with that Wisdom and Knowledge, and all those Principles of Piety and Vertue, which would have made him a living and active image of the Divine pertections. This was the glory and the happiness of his nature to know God, and to be like him, to praise and adore his great Benefactor, and to be inseperably united to him by those natural tyes of love and obe-

dience. For nothing elſe can be the happineſs of a reaſonable Creature, but Conformity to the Divine Nature, which is the pattern and meaſure of all rational perfections and happineſs. And therefore when Mankind apoſtatized from God, they miſerably defeated the end of their Creation, and intercepted thoſe natural Communications of the divine goodneſs, by making themſelves unworthy and uncapable of them: and now we may eaſily imagine, how much a good God was grieved, and offended with this, not as a haughty and Imperious Prince would be with the miſcarriages and rebellion of his Subjects, but as a kind Father is diſpleaſed and grieved for the diſobedience of his Children, for their refractory and unmanageable temper; not ſo much as an affront and contempt of his own Authority, but as it is a neceſſary cauſe of the ruine and miſery of his Children, whoſe happineſs he ſo paſſionately deſires and deſigns.

This made the divine goodneſs ſo reſtleſly zealous and concerned for the recovery of Mankind; various ways he attempted in former Ages, but

* with little success, as I observed before: but at last God sent his own Son our Lord Jesus Christ into the World to be the great Shepherd and Bishop of Souls, to seek and to save that which was lost. * *Of the Knowledge of Christ,* p. 19.

And that we may be able in some measure to comprehend the infinite Wisdom and goodness of this contrivance, and how well the means is fitted to the end, we must consider that the whole Mystery of the recovery of mankind consists only in repairing the Divine Image, which was defaced by sin; that is in making all men truly good and vertuous. Sin is our apostasie from God, and doth as naturally make us miserable, as it makes us unlike the most happy Being. But holiness restores us to our Primitive State, to the perfect constitution of our Natures, and makes us good, and therefore happy, as God is.

And this was the great difficulty to perswade men to be good, to work upon the different tempers, and inclinations, and passions, of mankind, and to reduce them to the forsaken and untrodden paths of vertue: and though the laws and precepts, the great promises

miſes and threatnings of the Goſpel confirmed by ſo many ſtupendious miracles, and by the reſurrection of Chriſt from the Dead, have in themſelves a mighty power to reform the World, yet the conſideration of Chriſt's Perſon, of what he did, and ſuffered for us gives a peculiar force and energy to them.

Sin and guilt makes men fearful, and it makes them diſingenuous, they are apt to diſtruſt goodneſs or to abuſe it: will either believe God implacable, which makes them deſperate, becauſe there is no hope of pardon; or believe him to be fond and indulgent, which makes them ſaucy and preſumptuous; and to prevent both theſe extreams of ſuperſtition, which are ſuch profeſt Enemies to a ſincere and unaffected Religion, God ſent his own Son into the World, and by the greatneſs of his Perſon, and the manner and circumſtances of his appearance, did confute them both.

If guilt make us afraid of God as an angry and ſevere judge, behold here the diſtance taken in the Incarnation of the Son of God, who condeſcended to come down to us cloathed with

with our nature, as a mild and a gentle Prince, by all the methods of love and ſweetneſs to reduce us to our Allegiance and ſubjection to God; in him we ſee the good will of God to Sinners, here is a demonſtration of condeſcending goodneſs, which ſtooped as low as earth, and did not diſdain the nature and appearance of a man, nor the Converſation of Sinners, nor the ſhame of the Croſs, nor the pale terrours and agonies of Death and the Grave.

And to remove all poſſible ſuſpition concerning Gods love to Sinners, the Son of God dies as a Sacrifice for our ſins, to make atonement for us, and with his blood Seals the Covenant of Grace and Pardon, and all the promiſes of Eternal life. And ſtill to give us the greater ſecurity of the performance of all this, our dying and ſuffering Lord is raiſed again from the dead, and advanced to the right hand of power and Majeſty to intercede for us.

Thus God deals with us after the manner of men, and to encourage us to return to our duty, hath given us all the ſecurity of our acceptance, that

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guilt it ſelf (though infinitely jealous and ſuſpicious) could deſire: for what could we wiſh for more, than that God ſhould ſend ſo great and ſo beloved a Perſon to us on an Embaſſy of Peace, than that the Son of God ſhould be our propitiation and Advocate, our Lord and Judge, he who took our nature and our infirmities on him, who knows our weakneſs and our temptations, who died to expiate our ſins, and is entred into the Holy of Holies to intercede for us in the vertue of his blood, and in the power of his glory, and the triumphs of his Conqueſts, and with a tender and compaſſionate ſenſe of our infirmities.

But then on the other hand to cure our preſumption, that we may not think God to be ſo eaſie, as to be reconciled to Sinners, and to their vices together; the death of Chriſt upon the Croſs aſſures us, what the merit is, and what the portion of ſin ſhall be; that all Sinners deſerve to die, and ſhall certainly have their deſerts without a ſincere repentance and reformation of their lives; for to expiate ſin by death can ſignifie no leſs than this, that death is the proper recompence of

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sin, and therefore that those sins which are not expiated by the Sacrifice of Christ (as none are, till we repent and reform) shall certainly be expiated by the Death of the Sinner. Especially considering how holy our Priest and Sacrifice was, we cannot reasonably conceive, that he died, or that he intercedes for incorrigible Sinners. The Sacrifice of his Death extends no farther, than the example of his life, *he was made manifest to destroy sin, and in him was no sin.*

Now though I dare not be so bold as to say, what infinite Wisdom can do, yet it is not imaginable, how God could have contrived a more effectual way to reform the World, which contains so many powerful obligations, such forceable endearments, such ravishing charms; which makes such a pleasant and inviting representation of God to the World, which so confirms our Faith, and encourages our hopes, and enflames our love, and awakens our fears, and excites our emulation, which doth even affect our senses with the arguments of Religion, and storm the lower and more bruitish faculties of our Souls, and captivate them to

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the love and obedience of Christ.

From hence it is easie to understand, what is the true method of a Sinners recovery by Christ, and what returns of love and gratitude we owe our Lord and Saviour. When we are so affected with all the powerful arguments to a new life, which are contained in his Incarnation, and life, and doctrine, and example, and miracles, and death, and resurrection, and Ascension into Heaven, and his Intercession for us, as to be sensible of the shame and folly of sin, and to be reconciled to the love and practice of true piety and holiness, then we partake in the merits of his Sacrifice, and find the benefit of his Intercession, and have a title to all the blessings, and promises of his Gospel: this was the design of Christ's coming into the World not to distract our guilty minds with the terrours of the Law; and the inexorable justice of God; not to bring us under a Legal dispensation of fear and bondage, but to encourage us to forsake our sins, and reform our lives, by all the endearments of love and goodness, and the lively hopes of a blessed Immortality, mixt with an awful regard and Reverence

rence for God, who is a holy and righteous Judge, and an irreconcileable Enemy to all sin. This is such a method of converting Sinners, as is proper to the Person of Christ, and the manner of his appearance, which was not designed to cause tempests and Earthquakes in our minds, like the Thunder and Lightning from Mount *Sinai*, but to work a reformation in the World by more silent and gentle methods, and in more humane ways. If our Faith in Christ have reformed our lives, and rectified the temper and disposition of our minds, and made us sincere Lovers of God and goodness.

Though we are not acquainted with these artificial methods of repentance, have not felt the workings of the Law, nor the amazing terrours of Gods wrath, nor the raging despair of damned Spirits, and then all on a sudden (as if we had never heard of any such thing before) have had Christ offered to us to be our Saviour, and heard the wooings and beseechings of Christ to accept of him, and upon this have made a formal contract and espousal with Christ, and such like working of a heated fancy, and religious distraction, though

though our conversion be not managed with so much art and method, and by so many steps and gradations, we are never the worse Christians for want of it. For indeed this must needs be the effect of ignorance, not of an acquaintance with Christ, which suggests so many encouraging considerations to return to God, as to a merciful and compassionate Father, and not to tremble at his presence, as a severe and inexorable judge.

And hence we learn, that the truest expression of love to our Saviour, is not some fond and amorous passions, but obedience to his Laws, and the greatest honour we can do him, is to imitate his example, and to express the power of his death and resurrection in the exemplary holiness of our lives; for this best answers the end of his coming into the World, is the fruit of his intercession for us, and the greatest glory and ornament of his spiritual Kingdom.

Thus I have given you a brief Scheme and Hypothesis of Religion from an acquaintance with Christs Person; and if they will owne this a safe way, to build Religion on an acquaintance

quaintance with Christs Person, they must owne, what I have now discourſed, which is much more agreeable to the *Person of Christ*, and the design of his appearing, and more easily and naturally deduced from it, than their own wild and fantastical conceits. If they do not like this, I must advise them to quit this way, as the which will serve others as well as themselves, and let us all fetch our Religion from the plain Doctrines and Precepts of the Gospel of Christ, not from any pretended Personal Acquaintance with him.

H SECT.

SECT. IV.

How men pervert the Scripture to make it comply with their fancies.

THere is a very obvious objection againſt this whole diſcourſe, the anſwering of which will further diſcover the ill conſequences of frameing ſuch fanciful *Idæas* of Religion from an acquaintance with Chriſt's Perſon; And that is this, that though theſe men deduce their Religion from an acquaintance with Chriſt, yet there are no men, that ſo abound in Scripture proofs to confirm what they ſay, and therefore they do not lay the Foundation of their Religion on ſuch uncertain conjectures; and the truth is, if you conſult theſe mens Writings, you ſhall find their Books ſtuffed with Scripture, or if you talk with them, their whole diſcourſe is little elſe, but Scripture phraſe: but that *Reverend Doctor* confeſſed the plain truth, that their Religion is wholly owing to *an acquaintance with the Perſon of Chriſt*, and

and could never have been *clearly* and *ſavingly* learn't from his *Goſpel*, had they not firſt grown acquainted with his *Perſon*. And then it is no wonder, if they can accommodate Scripture expreſſions to their own dreams and fancies. For when mens fancies are ſo poſſeſt with Schemes and *Idæas* of Religion, whatever they look on appears of the ſame ſhape and colour, wherewith their minds are already tinctured, like a man ſick of the Jaundies, or that looks through a painted Glaſs, who ſeeth every thing of the ſame colour, that his eye or Glaſs gives it: all the Metaphors, and Similitudes, and Allegories of Scripture are eaſily applyed to their purpoſe; and if any word ſound like the tinkling of their own fancies, It is no leſs than a demonſtration, that that is the meaning of the Spirit of God, and every little ſhadow and appearance doth mightily confirm them in their pre-conceived opinions. As *Irenæus* obſerves of the *Valentinians*, that they uſed one Artifice or other to adapt all the ſpeeches of our Saviour, and all the Allegories of Scripture *male compoſito phantaſmati*, to the ill

contrived figment of their own brain: and thus the minds of men are abuſed with words and phraſes, and the Scripture is preſt to ſerve every new-fangled conceit in Religion.

The wildeſt and moſt extravagant opinions that were ever yet vented under the name of Religion, have pretended the authority of Scripture for their Patronage; though any unprejudiced man would wonder, how the reading ſuch places of Scripture ſhould ſuggeſt ſuch notions to them: but this is no wonder, when we conſider that men firſt contrive their Religion (as theſe *acquaintances* of Chriſt do) and poſſeſs their fancies throughly with their private opinions, and then read the Scripture with no other deſign, than to find ſomething there to ſtamp Divinity on their own conceits. For it is eaſie to pervert the plaineſt ſenſe, and by the help of a ſtrong imagination to make any thing of any thing; ſuch men dote upon words and phraſes, metaphors, and alluſions, as beſt fitted for their purpoſe, they found their Religion on obſcure Texts, or Myſtical interpretations of plain Texts, and by the help of ſome arbitrary diſtinctions,

ctions, and limitations, gloſſes, and paraphraſes, by curtailing of Texts, or tranſplacing words and comma's, or ſeparating a ſingle ſentence from the body of the diſcourſe, make the Scripture ſpeak their ſenſe as plainly, as the Bells ring, what every boy will have them. Which is to deal with the Scripture (as *Irenæus* obſerves) as if a man ſhould take a Picture of the *King* which conſiſted of an artificial compoſition of precious ſtones, and tranſplace all theſe ſtones into another form, as ſuppoſe of an Ape, and then ſhould perſwade ſilly people, that that was the Kings Picture: At this rate we may find the *Alcoran* in the Bible, as well as make ſo many Books ſo different, and contrary to each other, from the various compoſition of twenty four Letters. This is plain and evident at the firſt propoſal to any intelligent Reader, but to put it out of all doubt, I ſhall give you ſome Inſtances of it, and ſhow you how theſe *familiar acquaintances of Chriſt* (and who may better make bold with him than they) take the liberty to pervert his Goſpel to ſerve their opinion.

There are two ways of expounding

Scripture in great vogue among them. First, by the ſound and clink of words and phraſes, which is all ſome men underſtand by *keeping a form of ſound words.* Secondly, when this will not do, they reaſon about the ſenſe of Scripture from their own pre-conceived notions, and opinions, and prove that this muſt be the meaning of Scripture, becauſe otherwiſe it is not reconcileable to their dreams, which is called expounding Scripture by the *Analogy of Faith*:

First, they expound Scripture by the ſound of words and phraſes, that is, if they can find any words in Scripture, which chime to the tune of their private conceits, without ever conſidering the uſe of the words in thoſe places where they are found, they clap their own ſenſe on them, and then they ſerve for very ſolid and ſubſtantial proofs. I ſhall give you ſeveral inſtances of this way.

Thus when men are poſſeſt with the fancy of *an acquaintance with Chriſts* Perſon, then to *know Chriſt* can ſignifie nothing elſe, but to know his Perſon, and all his perſonal excellencies and beauties, fulneſs and preciouſneſs, *&c.*

&c. and when Chriſt is ſaid to *be made Wiſdom to us*, this is a plain proof, that we muſt learn all our ſpiritual Wiſdom from an acquaintance with his Perſon. Though ſome duller men can underſtand no more by it, than the Wiſdom of thoſe Revelations Chriſt hath made of Gods will to the World.

Thus when men have firſt learn't from an acquaintance with Chriſt to place all their hopes of Salvation in a *Perſonal Union* with Chriſt, from whom they receive the free Communications of Pardon and Grace, Righteouſneſs and Salvation, what more plain proof can any man who is reſolved to believe this, deſire of it, than firſt *Ep. John* 5. 12. *He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son, hath not life.* For what can *having the Son* ſignifie, but having an Intereſt in him, being made one with him; though ſome will be ſo perverſe as to underſtand it, of believing and obeying his Goſpel; but the phraſe of *Having the Son* confutes that dull and moral interpretation, eſpecially when we remember, that it is called being *In Chriſt* and *abiding in him*, which muſt ſignifie a very near Union between Chriſts Per-

ſon and us, ſuch as there is between two things, which are within one another, which makes all Chriſt ours, and us Chriſts.

Now it is ſelf evident, that before we can thus be united to Chriſt, we muſt go to him, and therefore *Faith*, which is the Inſtrument of this Union, is very luckily called *coming to Chriſt:* from whence it is very evident, that to believe in Chriſt is to go to him for Salvation, which Metaphors of coming and going are a very intelligible explication of believing. But when the Soul is come to Chriſt, is this enough? no ſurely, the Soul then muſt *receive Chriſt*, as Saint *John* tells us, *to as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the Sons of God. John* 1. 12. That Faith, which ſerves us for legs to go to Chriſt, muſt be a hand to receive him, and to apply all his merits and fulneſs and righteouſneſs to our Souls; and now when we have received him, we muſt embrace him in our arms too, *as good old* Simeon *did, when he found him in the Temple*, which is a little nearer Union; as plainly appears from the example of the *Patriarchs, who ſaw the promiſes afar of, and embraced*

braced them. Hebr. 11. 13. and now we have Chriſt, we muſt *truſt, and lean upon him*, as we are often commanded, *to truſt in God, which ſignifies that Act of Faith, whereby finding and feeling our own weakneſs, as unable to ſupport our ſelves, we do lean and reſt on Chriſt*, and if leaning be not enough, we may make a little more bold, *and rowl on him, as appears from Pſalm* 37. 5. *rowl thy ways on the Lord, as the Original* Gal *ſignifies, which is that Act of Faith, whereby we being laden with ſin, and ſeeking eaſe, we at laſt diſcharge our Load, and caſt it on Chriſt.* And this is plain from the phraſe of believing *In* Chriſt, and *On* Him. 1 *Peter* 2. 6. for what can that ſignifie, but leaning and rowling on Him, *laying and building our ſelves on him, as on a Foundation.* And now we have thus brought our Souls to Chriſt, we muſt commit them to his truſt to take charge of them, and ſave them, and if they periſh, it will be his fault, and he muſt give account of it. Thus Saint *Paul* did 2 *Tim.* 1. 12. *I know whom I have believed, and I am perſwaded, that he is able to keep that, which I have committed to him againſt that day.* And now we muſt hide our

ſelves

ſelves in Chriſt from the fierce wrath and diſpleaſure of God, *as the Dove hides in the Rocks*, Cant. 2. 14. *O my Dove in the Cleſts of the Rocks. Chriſt's wounds are the cleſts of the rocks, where this believing Soul, Chriſts Dove, hides it ſelf.* And beſides this, *a Rock is a Screne to ſhade off the heat, ſo Chriſt is called Iſai. 32. 2. a ſhadow from the heat; he ſhades a poor Sinner from the ſcorchings of Gods wrath.* And then, *We muſt fetch comfort too from Chriſt, as honey came out of the Rock, Deut. 32. 13. he made him ſuck honey out of the Rock, and oyl out of the flinty Rock, the honey of the Promiſe, and the oyl of gladneſs comes out of this bleſſed Rock.*

Watſon's Chriſts Lovelineſs.

But this is not enough yet; for we muſt *be cloathed with the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt, as appears from that expreſſion that we muſt put on Chriſt. Rom. 13. 14. Gal. 3. 27.* which can ſignifie nothing elſe, but putting on Jeſus Chriſt, that is his righteouſneſs, as men put on a Garment to cover their nakedneſs, and to adorn them. *And therefore Chriſt is reſembled to a beautiful Robe.* Iſai. 61. 10. *He hath covered me with the Robe of Righteouſneſs: His righteouſneſs is a lovely Robe, no Robe of Gold or Ermin,*

Idem.

Watſon Ibidem.

wherewith

wherewith Kings are inveſted, is ſo honourable as this, In this Robe we ſhine as Angels in Gods Eye; The High Prieſts glorious Veſtments, Exod. 28. 2. *The Mytre, the Robe, the Ephod of gold, and the Breaſt plate of precious ſtones, did all but ſerve to ſet out the beautiful Robes of Chriſts righteouſneſs, wherewith a Believer is adorned:* thus if we would get the bleſſing, we muſt go to God, as *Jacob* did in the Robes of our Elder Brother, though I confeſs, this reſemblance doth not very well pleaſe me; for though *Jacob* was a good man, yet this looks like a cunning trick, to rob his elder Brother of the bleſſing, and to cheat his blind Father, and men muſt not think that God is thus to be impos'd upon. But however that be, this is plain, that when we are thus united to Chriſt, and made one with him, then *all Chriſt is ours*, as the Apoſtle tells us, *All is yours, and you are Chriſts, and Chriſt is Gods:* The merit of his Death is ours to free us from the guilt and puniſhment of our ſins, and his Active obedience to the will of God, his Righteouſneſs is ours for our juſtification, as is plain, in that he is called the *Lord our Righteouſneſs*, and is

ſaid

ſaid *to be made unto us of God Righteouſneſs*. And as *J. O.* well obſerves, we are reconciled to God by the Death of his Son, and ſaved by his life, that is by the *Righteouſneſs of his life*, which is made ours. *Rom.* 5. 10. And now what better proof can you deſire for all this, if you will be contented with expreſs words. Though I am very much of the Doctors mind, that we could never have diſcovered theſe myſteries clearly and ſavingly, had it not been for an acquaintance with Chriſts Perſon. No man would ever have dream't of ſuch interpretations of Scripture, who had not been prepoſſeſt with the myſterious notion of a fanciful Union to Chriſt, and application of Chriſt to us: for here is no other proof of this, but words and phraſes, ſeparated from the body of the Text, and the deſign of the diſcourſe, and like ſtraglers pickt up, and liſted into the ſervice of their Hypotheſis.

For indeed the whole myſtery of this, and a great deal more ſtuff of this nature, conſiſts in wreſting metaphorical, and alluſive expreſſions to a proper ſenſe. When the Scripture deſcribes the profeſſion of Chriſtianity, a ſincere belief and obedience to the Goſpel,

Goſpel, by having Chriſt, and being *in* Chriſt, and coming to him, and receiving him, theſe men expound theſe phraſes to a proper and natural ſenſe, to ſignifie, I know not what unintelligible Union, and ſpiritual progreſs and cloſure of the Soul with him; An Union of Perſons, inſtead of an agreement in faith and manners. As will appear more hereafter.

Thus when they talk of our ſpiritual impotency, and inability to do any good thing (for after all the noiſe they make about our coming to Chriſt, they mean being carryed thither with an Omnipotent and irreſiſtible power) they prove it wonderfully from *our being dead in treſpaſſes and ſins*, and therefore as a dead man can contribute nothing to his own Reſurrection, no more can we towards our Converſion: which is true of natural Death, but will be hard to prove of a moral Death, which conſiſts in the prevalency of vicious habits contracted by long cuſtom (which was the caſe of the Heathens, whom the Apoſtle there ſpeaks of) which do ſo enſlave the will, that it is very difficult, though not impoſſible, for ſuch perſons to return to the

the love and practice of vertue: another argument of the like nature is, that we are said to be *created to good works*, and to *become new Creatures*, and therefore can contribute no more to it, than we did to our first Creation: and that we are *born again*, which signifies, that we are wholly passive in it: which were true indeed, if our *being created* to good works did signifie the manner and method of our Conversion, and not the nature of the new Creature, which is the true meaning of it; that as in the first Creation we were created after the image of God, so we are renewed after his image in the second; which is therefore expressly called in other places the renewing and renovation of our minds.

When this way fails, they take another course with metaphors, and similitudes to make them serve their purpose, and that is, by considering all the properties and qualifications of those things Christ is compared to, and applying all, that will serve their turn, to Christ, without any regard to the end, for which they are used.

Thus the *Kingdom of Heaven*, that is

is the Goſpel, is compared to a pearl of great price. *Mathew* 13. 46. This Pearl in ſome mens Divinity ſignifies Chriſt, and the excellency of Chriſt appears plainly in this compariſon. *For other Pearls add no real worth to them, that wear them, but Chriſt this Illuſtrious Pearl doth, he makes us worthy with his worthineſs.* Excellently turned to ſerve their purpoſe; though all that the Parable means is, that we ſhould be as ready to part with all for the belief and profeſſion of the Goſpel, as other men are, to ſell all they have to purchaſe a pearl of great value. *Watſons Chriſts Lovelineſs.*

Thus Chriſt was prefigured by Mannah, *and this* Mannah *was of a circular figure, and this Circle was a figure of Chriſts perfection; this was meat cooked and dreſt in Heaven, God himſelf prepared it, and then ſerved it in, thus Jeſus Chriſt was prepared and ſet apart of his Father to the bleſſed work of Mediatorſhip. And* Mannah *ſuited it ſelf to every ones Palate, thus Jeſus Chriſt ſuits himſelf to every Chriſtians condition; he is full of quickning, ſtrengthening, comforting vertue.* That is, he is what every man fancies him to be, reliſhes according to the guſto of their own palates: *Idem. Chriſts Lovelineſs.*

what

what precious diſcoveries are here of Chriſt! and what irrefragable proofs for them! Thus to proceed, Chriſt was reſembled to a Rock, 1 *Cor.* 10. 3. *That Rock was Chriſt. And then he is a Rock for defence, and a Rock for offence, and a Rock for Comfort to ſcrene us from the wrath of God, and to contain the honey of the promiſes.* Chriſt is reſembled by the brazen Serpent: *now braſs being an inferiour metal ſignifies the meanneſs of his humanity, and it being a firm ſolid metal, it ſignifies the power of his Godhead, and though it ſhines, it doth not dazle the eyes, and ſo ſignifies the glory of the Godhead vailed with the Manhood:* thus the *brazen Serpent was made like a Serpent, but was no real Serpent, ſo Chriſt was made in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh, but was no Sinner. The Serpent was liſt up, ſo Chriſt was liſt up in the acclamations of Angels, in the preaching of the Goſpel, and upon the Croſs, which the Pole was a Type of, and in our hearts by contemplating, admiring, loving him. And the Serpent was liſt up to be lookt upon by the ſtung Iſraelites, which looking implyed a ſecret hope, they had of Cure, ſo if we do but look on Chriſt fiducially,* we

Watſon. ibidem.

Watſon's truebrazen Serpent.

we ſhall be cured of our ſins. Never was there ſo happy a man in expounding Types; never was any brazen Serpent half ſo ſubtil.

Thus as the ſame Author tells us, *Chriſt is compared to a* Vine, *and that upon ſeveral accounts. The Vine of it ſelf is weak, and muſt be ſupported and born up, ſo the Humane Nature of Chriſt* (which it ſeems is repreſented by the Vine) *was of it ſelf weak, and was fain to be ſupported, and underpropt by the Divine Nature. The Vine grows in the Garden, not in the Foreſt, thus Chriſt grows in the Garden of the Church, he is not known among the Heathen*: but I ſhould have thought it more grand to have ſaid, that Chriſt this Spiritual Vine doth not find, but make a Garden, where ever he grows, ſince the Church owes its Being to him, not he to the Church; thus *the Vine communicates to the branches, and Chriſt ſhoots up his ſap of grace into Believers, who are the branches of this Vine: And the Vine hath rare, delicious, fruit growing on it, and thus the promiſes are the Cluſters of Grapes growing upon Chriſt the true Vine. And whereas other Vines bear but one ſort of fruit, this ſpiritual* Watſon's Spiritual Vine.

Vine bears many, the fruit of juſtification, the fruit of ſanctification, and the fruit of conſolation. And the blood of Chriſt is the Wine of this Spiritual Vine, which cheers the heart of man, as other Wine doth, as he excellently proves from an old Latin Catch, *Curam metumq; juvat dulci lydo ſolvere*, that is let us drink away care, &c. and now what fine work might a prophane wit make with Scripture at this rate of expounding metaphors.

But ſtill they have a ſetch beyond all this, which conſiſts in jumbling metaphors, and Allegories, and Types, and Figures, altogether, and proving one thing from another in a moſt wonderful manner.

As ſuppoſe a man would prove, that Chriſt is infinitely beautiful and lovely, this is a moſt eaſie thing to do, if you take the right method: for firſt, *he is Lovely in his Titles, he is the deſire of all Nations, the Prince of Peace, the holy one of* Iſrael, *Elect and precious, theſe are moſt lovely Titles, which argue him to be very beautiful.*

Watſons Chriſts Lovelineſs.

And then he is lovely in his Types too: *he was typified by Perſons moſt lovely: by* Moſes, *and* David, *and* Solomon,

mon, who were all lovely for one thing or other, either upon account of Natural beauty, or education, or office, or thoſe great things done by them. But then he was typified by lovely things; As by the *Pillar of Cloud and Fire, which was moſt lovely to behold*; *by the* Mannah, *which was very lovely too, becauſe it was of a circular figure, and extraordinary meat, and ſuited to every ones Palate*; and by *the mercy ſeat, and brazen Serpent, and Noahs Ark.* Who can forbear being ſmitten with ſo *lovely* a Perſon? *Lovely as a Pillar of Cloud and fire, lovely as Noahs Ark, lovely* as any *Serpent*, yea as *a brazen Serpent?* But beſides all theſe, *Chriſt is reſembled to a Roſe, the Roſe of* Sharon, *the Queen of flowers, and how lovely is this Roſe. To a Vine, the nobleſt of Plants, and oh what lovely Cluſters grow upon this Vine! To a Corner ſtone, and oh how lovely and precious is this Stone! to a Rock, and a River in a dry ground, and a rich treaſure, and a beautiful Robe, and all theſe are lovely,* (and ſo ſhould any thing have been, that had come in his way at that time) and who can doubt after all this, *but that Chriſt is the chiefeſt of ten thouſands,*

ſands, yea that he is altogether lovely.

Thus if I had a mind to imitate theſe men, and prove that Chriſt is very powerful, as well as lovely, moſt of the ſame types and reſemblances would ſerve the turn. For he was prefigured by *Moſes*, who did wonders in *Ægypt*; He was typified by *David*; who killed *Goliah*; by *Solomon*; who was the moſt powerful Prince in his days; by the Pillar of Cloud and Fire, out of which God thundred upon the Hoſt of *Pharoah*; By the brazen Serpent, which had power to Cure the ſtung *Iſraelites*; by *Noahs* Ark, which was certainly very ſtrong, that it could reſiſt all the force and power of the general deluge; He is reſembled to a Corner ſtone, which ſupports the whole building, to a Rock which is for offence, and defence, to a rich treaſure, and riches all men know, are the Nerves and Sinews of Power, and he is moſt beautiful, and beauty is ſtronger than all the reſt, and Conquers more than Sword or Fire.

Thus Chriſt is very rich; for he is rich in Wiſdom, and rich in beauty, and rich in ſtrength, and power, rich in his Godhead, and rich in his Manhood;

hood; and then do but add Huſband to all this, and he is a rich and a powerful, and a beautiful Huſband: thus Chriſt is Lovely, becauſe he is rich and powerful, and he is powerful, becauſe he is rich and lovely, and Rich, becauſe he is powerful and lovely: and how is it poſſible theſe men ſhould want proofs for any thing. And is there any need now to prove, that all this is the work of fancy and imagination, that it is nothing but phraſe, and Religious tattle, the fruit of precarious *Hypotheſes*, and of a pretended acquaintance with Chriſts Perſon; for at this Rate it were eaſie to make any thing of any thing, to find out ſome pretty words, and phraſes, and alluſions, types, or Metaphors, to countenance all the feats of Enthuſiaſm, and the more godly Romances of Popiſh Legends. He who would be an honeſt Reader of Books, who hath no mind to turn every thing into Burleſque, ought carefully to diſtinguiſh between proper, and alluſive, or metaphorical expreſſions, to conſider the uſe of words and phraſes, and the great variety of Dialects, and the peculiar Moods of ſpeaking in every lan-

guage, and in every age, and to urge Metaphors no further than their first intention, without which we may deal by all Authors, as these men deal by the Scripture, make them speak non-sence, or (as they use to call them) venerable Mysteries, and overthrow and contradict their own design: And this is their first way of expounding, otherwise called adulterating and debauching Scripture, by the sound of words.

Secondly, When this will not do, then they argue and reason about the sense of Scripture from their own preconceived notions and opinions of Religion, pretend to prove their own Scheme and fancies of Religion from the Scripture, but in truth prove the sense of the Scripture by its agreement with their own opinions; which is such a trick, as the Papists have got, to prove the Authority of the Church from the Scripture, and the Scripture from the Church. I might give Instances of this in abundance, but I shall mention only some few, lest I tire my self, and my Reader.

Thus after all their talk of being justified by the imputation of Christs Righteousness, there are a great many places

places of Scripture, which expreſly tell us, *that we are juſtified by Faith; have Remiſſion of ſins by Faith, have peace with God by Faith, are ſanctified by Faith, are the Sons of God by Faith, have Eternal Life, and are ſaved by Faith:* now how do you think ſhall all theſe Scriptures be reconciled to their notion of being juſtified by the imputation of Chriſts Righteouſneſs: for Faith certainly is not the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt in their notion of it: why this is plain at firſt ſight to theſe *acquaintances* of Chriſt. *For when Faith is ſaid to juſtifie, and ſave, &c. we muſt not underſtand this abſolutely, that is, we muſt not underſtand this of Faith, conſidered as Faith, but we muſt underſtand it relatively, that Faith juſtifies, as it brings us to Chriſt, and makes us one with him, by whom we are juſtified: Faith apprehends the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt, and the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt juſtifies:* now this diſtinction is plainly owing to their preconceived opinions, without which no man could ever have ſtumbled on it: that when the Scripture ſaith, that Faith juſtifies, the meaning ſhould be, that it juſtifies and ſaves inſtrumentally and relatively (words

which the Scriptures are unacquainted with) that is, not as it is Faith, but as it apprehends the Righteousness of Christ; which in plain words signifies, that Faith does not justifie; though the Scripture so often says it does.

But now the Reason of this Interpretation is very plain; for should Faith justifie, as our own Act, (that is, as Faith) it would be as bad as good works, and as perfectly irreconcileable with the free Grace of God: *For had justification been promised to any thing wrought in us, or done by us, it had been of desert, not of Grace, of wages, not of mercy: if God had promised justification upon any work of ours, had said, we must bring so much humiliation, so much repentance, so much breaking of Spirit, so much Grace, so many Prayers, Alms-deeds,* (or so much Faith, as our own Act) *and then we should be justified, it would not have been of Grace,* not of free mercy: though modest men, who are not so apt to dream of meriting by every thing they do, would have thought, that free Grace and Faith might have been easily reconciled, though Faith had justified, as our own Act, since the reward and recompence

pence does ſo infinitly exceed the work that there can be no ſuſpition of merit, and where there is no merit, the Reward is of Grace, and not of debt, whatever the condition of the promiſe be.

But this is paſt all doubt, when it is confirmed by a metaphor or two, of which there is great variety, ſome more apt than others: as for Inſtance: *the vertue is not in Faith but in Chriſt,* as appears in this, *a Ring, which hath a precious ſtone in it, which will ſtaunch blood, we ſay the Ring ſtaunch eth blood, but the vertue doth not barely lye in the Ring, but in the ſtone in the Ring: ſo Faith is the Ring, Chriſt the precious ſtone, all that Faith does, is to bring home Chriſts merits to the Soul, and ſo it juſtifies:* ſo that if you can but find out an improper and abſurd form of ſpeech in uſe among the vulgar, or if you can but invent one, as this Gentleman does, for I never met with this before; it is a ſufficient reaſon to expound Scripture, as improperly as unlearned men talk, or think; or if you can but fancy Faith a Ring, and Chriſt a precious Stone, it is enough to anſwer all thoſe places of Scripture, which ſpeak of that legal and meritorious way

Watſon's Myſtery of the Lord's Supper, p. 64.

of

of juſtification by Faith: And thus Faith juſtifies, as it is a receptive Grace: it is the receiving the Gold, that enriches, ſo Faith receiving of Chriſts merits, and filling the Soul with all the fulneſs of God, muſt needs be an enriching Grace: *In the body there are Veins, that ſuck the nouriſhment that comes into the Stomach, and turns it into blood and Spirits; Faith is ſuch a ſucking Vein, that draws vertue from Chriſt, and therefore is called a precious Faith:* Is not this very plain now to him, who underſtands the nature of our Union to Chriſt, which is like that of the Members of a natural body, and that we are ſaved by Chriſt, juſt as the body is nouriſhed by the Stomach.

Idem. p. 65.

And now to make all clear, we may give a Philoſophical account, why God choſe Faith to be the Inſtrument of our Juſtification; *becauſe it is a humble Grace, and gives the glory of all to free Grace. If repentance ſhould fetch juſtification from Chriſt, a man would be ready to ſay, this was for my tears* (ſtrange deſerving Creatures theſe, who can dream of meriting Heaven with a few tears) *but Faith is humble, it is an empty hand, and what merit can there*

Ibidem.

there be in that? doth a poor mans reaching out his hand, merit an Alms? (yes juſt as much as a few tears merit Heaven) *Faith is only a golden Bucket, that draws Water out of the well of life*; But why may not thoſe, who are ſo apt to be conceited of merit, grow as proud, that they have a *golden Bucket*, as if the whole Well were their own.

Thus you ſee, how theſe men deal with the Scripture, and *poor humble Faith*, make what they pleaſe of them, to fit them to their purpoſe; that Faith is ſometimes feet to go to Chriſt, ſometimes a hand to receive him, a mouth to feed on him, an eye to look fiducially on him, a Ring to hold this precious Stone, a Vein to ſuck juſtification out of the Spiritual Stomach (which by the way is a very new conceit, for though Chriſt is called the head, I never before read, that he was the Stomach) a Bucket to draw water out of this *Well*, *Chriſt*, though in this they are very civil to Faith, in making it a Golden Bucket; whereas at other times they tell us, that Faith may be a ſore and blear-eyed *Leah*, a ſhaking and Palſie hand, weak and bending Legs, and have all the infirmities that may

may be, and be never the worſe neither as to the purpoſe of juſtification; ſo that Faith had need be a very humble Grace, elſe it would take ſuch language very ill from them.

Thus to give you but one inſtance more; when theſe men are preſt with thoſe Scriptures, that urge the neceſſity of good works, and a holy life: *that without holineſs no man ſhall ſee God; that the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven againſt all unrighteouſneſs, and ungodlineſs of men.* That our acceptation with God depends upon a holy and vertuous life: *that God is no reſpector of Perſons, but in every Nation, he that feareth God, and worketh Righteouſneſs is accepted with him. That except our Righteouſneſs exceed the Righteouſneſs of the Scribes and Phariſees* (thoſe Immoral Hypocrites who plac't all their Righteouſneſs in obſerving the Ceremonies of the Law without the purity of their hearts and lives) *we ſhall in no wiſe enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. That he who breaks one of the leaſt of theſe Commandments, and teacheth men ſo; ſhall be called leaſt in the Kingdom of Heaven* (that is ſhall have no Inheritance there) *and he that doth,*

doth, and teacheth them, ſhall be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven, that is ſhall be greatly rewarded, with many more of the like nature, which aſſert the abſolute neceſſity of a holy life, and keeping the Commandments of God, to entitle us to his love and favour, and the rewards of the next life; which perfectly overthrow their fundamental notion of juſtification by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt; the merits of whoſe death they ſay free us from the guilt of ſin, and that puniſhment, which is due to it, make us as perfectly Innocent, as if we had never offended, and the righteouſneſs of his life imputed to us, makes us righteous, ſo as to deſerve a reward: gives us an actual title to glory. Now any one, who is not mightily acquainted with the Perſon of Chriſt, would think it a very hard taſk to reconcile this Doctrine of Juſtification by the imputation of Chriſts Righteouſneſs without any thing of our own, with the neceſſity of a holy life, which the Scripture doth ſo expreſly aſſert. But theſe men defie you, if you charge them with deſtroying the neceſſity of a holy life: And I wiſh with all my heart,

heart, that whatever the consequence of their Doctrines is, it may have no bad influence upon their lives.

For they tell us, *that this Universal Obedience and good works* (a very suspicious word, which methinks these men should be afraid to name) *are indispensably necessary from the Soveraign appointment and will of God, this is the will of God, even our Sanctification; It is the will of the Father, and it is the will of the Son, I have ordained you, that you bring forth fruit.* John 15. 16. *and the appointment of the Holy Ghost. And then Holiness is one eminent and special end of the peculiar dispensation of Father, Son, and Spirit, in the business of exalting the glory of God in our Salvation; It is the end of the Fathers electing love, he hath chosen us, that we should be holy,* Eph. 1. 4. *the end of the Sons redeeming love, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all iniquity, and to purifie to himself a peculiar people zealous of good works.* Titus 2. 14. *and of the Spirits sanctifying love*, as any one would easily guess.

Dr. Owen's Communion with Christ, Ch. 8.

It is necessary to the glory of God, to the glory of the Father, to the glory of the Son, and to the glory of the Holy Ghost,

Ghoſt, whoſe Temple we are: and are not theſe men now mightily injured in being charged with denying the neceſſity of a Holy Life, who make it neceſſary upon ſo many accounts? Is it not great pity, they ſhould be ſo abuſed? But the truth is, all this is not one ſyllable to the purpoſe; for the queſtion was about its neceſſity to Salvation, and if we be juſtified and ſaved without it, all this cannot prove any neceſſary obligation on us to the practice of it: God hath appointed and commanded obedience, but where is the ſanction of this Law, will he damn thoſe, who do not obey, for their diſobedience, and will he ſave and reward thoſe who do obey for their obedience, not a word of this; for this deſtroys our juſtification by the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt *only*. And if after all theſe commands, God hath left it indifferent, whether we obey or not, I hope ſuch commands cannot make obedience neceſſary.

The Father hath elected us to be holy, and the Son redeemed us to be holy: but will the Father elect and the Son redeem none but thoſe who are holy, and reject and reprobate all others;

others? doth this Election and Redemption ſuppoſe Holineſs in us, or is it without any regard to it? For if we be elected and redeemed without any regard to our own being holy, our Election and Redemption is ſecure, whether we be holy or not, and ſo this cannot make holineſs neceſſary on our parts, though it may be neceſſary on Gods part to make us holy, but that is not our care.

Obedience and a holy life is for the glory of the Father, the Son, and holy Spirit: how ſo? when the neceſſity of Holineſs is ſo deſtructive to free Grace, which is the only glory God deſigns to advance by Chriſt. If this will not do yet *Holineſs is neceſſary to our honour, for it makes us like to God.* Prophane men that they are! as if the perfect Righteouſneſs of Chriſt, his beautiful Robes, were not much more for our honour, and did not make us more like to God than the rags and patches of our own Righteouſneſs: however if men prefer their luſts and intereſts before their honour, the neceſſity of holineſs ceaſes.

But it is for Peace. What Peace I pray

pray you? Peace of Conſcience? Why then muſt we at laſt fetch our Peace and ſecurity from our own duties and graces? Is not this to renounce Chriſt?

Miſerable men that we are! muſt we then ſet about correcting our lives, amending our ways, performing duties required, and ſo follow after righteouſneſs according to the Preſcript of the law? Why this is the courſe, wherein many men continue long with much perplexity, ſometimes hoping, oftner fearing, ſometimes ready to give quite over, ſometimes vowing to continue (their Conſciences being no ways ſatisfied, nor righteouſneſs in any meaſure obtained) all their days; After they have tired themſelves perhaps in the largeneſs of their ways, they come at length with fear and trembling and diſappointment to the concluſion of the Apoſtle, by the works of the Law no man is juſtified, and with David *cry, that if God marks what is done amiſs, there is no ſtanding before him.* And is this the way, in which we muſt ſeek for Peace? *is this the way to enjoy Communion with God* by our own righteouſneſs? *why doth not all our Wiſdom of walking with God conſiſt in our Acquaintance with Chriſt? God is light and in*

J. O. Excellency of Jeſus Chriſt. Digr. 2. p. 113.

Ibidem p. 119.

him is no darkneſs at all, we are darkneſs, and in us no light at all. He is life, a living God, we are dead, dead Sinners, dead in treſpaſſes and ſins. He is holineſs, and glorious in it, we wholly defiled, an abominable thing. He is love, we full of hatred, hating and being hated. Surely this is no foundation of agreement, or upon that of walking (that is of Communion) together: nothing can be more remote than this frame from ſuch a condition. The foundation then of this peace (that is of agreement and Communion with God) is laid in Chriſt, hid in Chriſt, he, ſaith the Apoſtle, is our peace, he hath made peace for us; he is the new and living way into the holy of holies. I am the way (ſaith Chriſt) and no man cometh to the Father, but by me; he is the Medium of all Communication between God and us, in him we meet, in him we walk. So that if this Gentlemans memory had not failed him, he would never have told us in the 8. *Chap.* that holineſs is neceſſary to our Peace and Communion with God: when a little before he had diſclaimed this, as wholly uſeleſs to that purpoſe.

But however holineſs is very *uſeful* to

to all the purposes of life: that it may be, and not necessary to Salvation: *It serves for the Conviction of the Enemies of God.* How so? When it is not essentially necessary to his Friends; And *it is for the Conversion of others.* Why so? When men may be converted without it: *It keeps the judgments of God from other men, as Ten good men would have preserved* Sodom. But why cannot the righteousness of Christ do this more effectually, than the holiness of men? But, *It is necessary in respect of the state and condition of justified Persons: for they are accepted, and received into Friendship with an holy God, a God of purer eyes, than to behold iniquity, &c.* and therefore they must cleanse and purifie themselves. What need of this? When they are Cloathed with the Robes of Christs Righteousness which is the only foundation of our Communion with God, as you heard before.

But however holiness is *necessary with respect to sanctification. We have in us a new Creature,* 2 Cor. 5. 17. *this new Creature is fed, cherisht, nourisht, kept alive, by the fruits of holiness; to what end hath God given us new hearts,*

and new Natures? is it, that we ſhould kill them, ſtifle the Creature, that is found in us, in the Womb? that we ſhould give him to the old man to be devoured? The phraſe of this is admirable, and the reaſoning unanſwerable: for if men be new Creatures, they will certainly live new lives, and this makes holineſs abſolutely neceſſary by the ſame Reaſon, that every thing neceſſarily is, what it is, when it is; but ſtill we enquire after a neceſſary obligation to the practice of holineſs, and that we cannot diſcover yet.

Well! *But Holineſs is neceſſary as the means to the end.* This indeed is ſomething to the purpoſe, but let us hear how: *Though it be neither the cauſe, matter, nor condition of our juſtification* (mark the Hypotheſis) *yet it is the way appointed of God for us to walk in for the obtaining Salvation, and therefore he that hath hope of Eternal Life, purifies himſelf, as he is pure, and none ſhall ever come to the end, who walketh not in the way, for without holineſs it is impoſſible to ſee God.* This I confeſs is all pertinent, and home to the purpoſe, but yet there are two little faults in it; that it contradicts it ſelf,

and

and overthrows their darling opinions, which I can very well pardon, if he can: What? the neceſſary way to Eternal Life, and yet neither the cauſe, matter, nor condition: at leaſt you might allow the way to Eternal life to be the *cauſa ſine qua non*, without which we ſhall never get thither; and that in ſpight of all your diſtinctions will entitle it to the nature of a condition. But not to diſpute about words, I am content it ſhould only be a neceſſary way to Eternal Life: but what becomes of Chriſt then? who is the *only* way, the truth and the life: is not the righteouſneſs of Chriſt able to ſave us without an additional righteouſneſs of our own? doth the Active and Paſſive Righteouſneſs of Chriſt both free us from guilt and puniſhment, and give us an actual right and title to glory? and yet can we not be ſaved without walking in the ways of holineſs? what becomes of free Grace then? is not this to *eke out the righteouſneſs of Chriſt with our own? to make Chriſt our juſtifier, and our works our Saviour?*

Thus you ſee, how men wreſt and pervert the Scripture to make it ſpeak

their ſenſe, and juſtifie their darling opinions and fancies, though not always with the ſame ſucceſs; for ſome truths are ſo plain and ſtubborn, that they will not bend, but muſt be broke into the moſt palpable abſurdities and contradictions, before they can be fitted to their opinions, and then they agree like new Cloath in an old Garment, which makes the rent the wider.

It were eaſie to produce many more inſtances of this nature, but this is enough to ſhow you how dangerous it is to pre-poſſeſs our fancies with ſome arbitrary notions in Religion, which naturally force men to pervert the Scriptures to make them ſpeak the Orthodox language. To this we owe all thoſe nice and ſubtle diſtinctions, which conſtitute the body of Syſtematical Divinity, which commonly have no other deſign, than to evade the force of Scripture, or to bribe it to ſpeak on their ſide. The Authority of Scripture is ſacred and inviolable, and it is dangerous to call that into queſtion, whatever acquaintance men have with the Perſon of Chriſt; but as Mr. *Chillingworth* obſerves of the Church of *Rome*,

Rome, that to eſtabliſh her Tyranny over mens Conſciences, ſhe need not either aboliſh or corrupt the holy Scripture (which in regard of the numerous multitude of Copies diſperſed through all places, tranſlated into almoſt all languages, guarded with all ſolicitous care and induſtry, had been an impoſſible attempt) but the more expedite way, and therefore the more likely to be ſucceſsful, was to gain the opinion and eſteem of the publick and authorized Interpreter of them, and the Authority of adding to them, what Doctrines ſhe pleaſed under the title of traditions or definitions. Thus though their fancies and the Scripture agree no better, than the Church of *Rome* and the Scripture do, yet they may be both retained, ſo their opinions may but expound the Scriptures, and add ſuch limitations, diſtinctions, gloſſes, *&c.* as are neceſſary to make them Orthodox.

The ſum of all is, that to know Chriſt is not to be thus acquainted with his Perſon, but to underſtand his Goſpel in its full latitude and extent; It is not the Perſon, but the Goſpel of Chriſt, which is the way, the truth, and the life, *which directs us in the true*

way to life and happiness. Which instructs us in our duty, and furnishes us with all the motives and arguments to a good life, and gives us the greatest assurance of our reward. This Acquaintance with Christs Person, which these men pretend to, is only a work of fancy, and teaches men the Arts of Hypocrisie, it undermines the fundamental design of the Gospel, makes men incurably ignorant, and yet conceited of their own knowledge, impertinent and endless talkers, and insolent Censurers of all Mankind: every Boy, who is acquainted with these notions, learns to despise the ignorance of his teachers, as if they knew nothing of Christ, and of the Mystery of the Gospel; and now the Laws of Christ will not down with them, this is moral and legal Preaching; nothing appears wholesom and savoury to their palates, but some Romantick descriptions of the beauty, lovelines, fulnes, and preciousnes of Christ. But I hope hereafter they will see reason to believe, that we are not such Strangers to Christ, as they imagine, but have a greater Reverence for him, than to be so rude and unmannerly,

than

than to make ſo bold with his Perſon, and with his Laws; and are too honeſt to abuſe the people with ſuch dreams and fruitleſs ſpeculations.

The wildneſs and diſtraction of theſe men makes me ſo much the more admire the Wiſdom and the Honeſty of our Church, who in her publick Catechiſm hath been careful to prevent theſe cheats and deluſions of fancy: feeds her Children with wholeſom and ſubſtantial food, hath taught them a Religion without Art or Subtilty, hath inſtructed them in the nature of their Baptiſmal Vow, and thoſe obligations it lays on them to a vertuous life: hath taught them the Apoſtles Creed, which contains thoſe great and eſſential Articles of Religion, which are the neceſſary Principles of Action, hath given them a plain and eaſie explication of the Ten Commandments, which are the rules of a good life, hath taught them to pray to God, and what the true deſign of our Saviours Inſtitutions is, without filling their heads with notions and Artificial Theories of Religion, which ſerve only to make them giddy with a vain conceit of knowledge, to talk ill, and to live worſe.

And

And now it is time to dismiss these acquaintances of Christ, and if nothing will make them wiser, to leave them to their own dreams and dotage; only advising them, that however they may indulge themselves in these choice speculations, they would have a care of pretending any acquaintance with Christs Person for the neglect or contempt of his Laws, lest they fare as ill, as another of his acquaintance did, *Luke* 19. 21. who argued from the severity of his temper and disposition to apologize for his own sloath and idleness: *for I feared Thee, because thou art an austere man, who takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that, thou didst not sow.* But it seems, as great an acquaintance as he was, he drew a very false conclusion, when he hid his Talent in a Napkin, as his Lord convinct him to his cost: and it will be the same case, though we argue from other Principles, not from the severity, but from the fondness and Indulgence of our Saviour, from the merits of his Death, or the Imputation of his Righteousness: The safest way is to do what he bids us, lest he be too hard for us at Reasoning, and making *Hypotheses.*

But

But yet there is one thing more, which I muſt take notice of: that as when the Scripture ſpeaks of the knowledge of Chriſt, it includes not only the ſpeculative part of knowledge, which conſiſts in true notions, and opinions, but the vertue and efficacy of this knowledge in the government of lives, in transforming us into the likeneſs of our Lord and Saviour, and and making us obedient to his Laws; without which all our knowledge is but like a curious piece of painting, an accurate Image and Picture, without life or ſence: ſo theſe men talk alſo of an experimental knowledge of Chriſt; the meaning of which is, that this acquaintance with the Perſon of Chriſt warms and heats their fancies, and moves their paſſions; ſometimes they find great breakings of heart, they melt and diſſolve into tears for their ſins, when they remember, what their Lord ſuffer'd for them, they ſee him hang upon the Croſs, and have all his agonies, and dying groans in their Ears; and then they Curſe their ſins that nailed him there, and tremble at the thoughts of the *Naturalneſs of Gods vindictive juſtice to him*: and feel all the

the horrours and agonies of damned Spirits: at other times they are mightily ravisht with his love, and charm'd and captivated with his beauty: fancy they have him in their arms in the closest embraces; *they hear Christ call them by name, and say to them, as he did to that Woman in the Gospel, thy sins are forgiven thee.* They are refresht and ravisht with his Comforts, and the sweet Caresses of his love: they see Christ adorning them with the beautiful Robes of his Righteousness, owning them for his dearest Spouse, and expressing all Conjugal affections to them; now they tast and relish the sweetness of Christ, which other men only talk of, and have an experimental sense of his fulness to supply their wants, of his Love in chearing their Souls, of his beauty in adorning them, they are all life and spirit, which is a plain argument, that now Christ hath taken up his abode with them.

This will fall under consideration in what follows; at present I shall only say this; that all this may be no more, than the working of a warm and Enthusiastick fancy, and no man ought to think himself ever the more experimentally

mentally acquainted with Christ, unless he find the power of it in governing his life: It is very desireable to have always such a quick and vigorous sense of the love of our dying Lord, as may constrain us to live to him, who dyed for us; but without this we are still ignorant of him, however we may be transported with these frantick raptures and exstasies of love and joy.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Of our Union to Christ, and Communion with him.

SECT. I.

NExt to the knowledge of Christ there is not a greater Mystery, than *our Union to him, and Communion with him*; on which, as these men represent it, are built all those wild and fanciful conclusions, which so directly oppose both the Doctrines and practice of Christianity. And therefore it is of great concernment to state this matter, and to examine, what is meant in Scripture by our Union to Christ, and Communion with him; for the Scripture does mention such a relation between Christ and Christians, as may be exprest by an Union, and those phrases of *being in Christ*, *and abiding in him*, can signifie no less.

I. And first, I observe, that those metaphors, which describe the Relation and Union betwixt Christ and Christians, do primarily refer to the Christian Church,

Church, not to every individual Chriſtian. Thus Chriſt is called *a Head*, but he is the head of his Church, which is his body, as a Huſband is the head of the Wife, *Eph.* 5. 23, 24. No particular Chriſtian is the body of Chriſt, but only a member in this body. Chriſt is called a Huſband, but then the whole Church or Society of Chriſtians, not every particular Chriſtian, is his Spouſe, as St. *Paul* tells the Church of *Corinth*, 2 *Cor.* 11. 2. *For I am jealous over you with a godly jealouſie; for I have eſpouſed you to one Huſband, that I may preſent you as a chaſt Virgin to Chriſt.* Chriſt is a *Shepherd*, and the Chriſtian Church is his Flock, *John* 10. For the relation between Shepherd and Sheep doth primarily concern the whole Flock: Chriſt is the Rock, upon which his Church is built, the chief Corner Stone, and the Chriſtian Church a Holy Temple: ſo that all theſe Metaphors in their firſt and moſt proper uſe refer to the whole Society of Chriſtians, and are deſigned to repreſent the Union between Chriſt and his Church.

Secondly, I obſerve further, that the Union of particular Chriſtians to Chriſt

Christ is by means of their Union to the Christian Church: the Church is *the body of Christ*, and every Christian by being united to this body becomes *a member of Christ*, as the Apostle tells the *Corinthians*, 1 *Cor.* 12. 27. *Now you are the body of Christ, and members in particular.* The Church is the *Temple of God built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ being the chief Corner stone*, and every Christian is a *lively stone in this spiritual building:* The Church is *Christ's Flock*, and every Christian, who is of this fold, is one of *Christ's Sheep.* The Church is *Christ's Spouse*, and every Christian is a member of that Society, which Christ owns for his Spouse: but every Christian is not *Christ's Spouse*; He is a great Enemy to *Polygamy*, and hath but *one Spouse*, as he hath but *one body, and one Church*; which quite spoils the prettiness and fantastical Wit of a late *Exhortation to young Women to chuse Christ for their Husband, because he is rich, and beautiful, and kind, and hath all the properties of an excellent Husband*; which would have sounded much better in a *Popish Nunnery*, than among such *pretenders*

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to reformation: for this is the great Art, whereby thoſe cunning Prieſts wheadle ſilly Girls into a profeſſion of *perpetual Virginity*, by perſwading them that in ſo doing, they are *marryed to Chriſt*: And to give every one their due, the Papiſts are the moſt generous ſort of Suiters for Chriſt, for they perſwade them to forſake all other Huſbands for Chriſt, which is more honourable and meritorious.

Thus to proceed, Chriſt is called the Vine, and Chriſtians the branches in that Vine, *John* 15. which muſt be expounded to the ſame ſenſe with what goes before, where Chriſt ſpeaking of himſelf ſaith, *I am the true Vine*. The meaning is, that Church, which is founded on the belief of my Goſpel, is the true Vine: *I*, ſignifies *Chriſt* together with *his Church*, *which is his body*: upon which account the *Church* is elſewhere called *Chriſt*, as I obſerved above. And my reaſons for this expoſition are theſe:

Firſt, Becauſe the Jewiſh Church is frequently in the Old Teſtament compared to a *Vine*, *Iſaiah* 5. *Jer.* 2. 21. *Hoſea* 10. 1. Now a *Vine* being the metaphor, whereby the *Church* uſeth to be

described, we cannot reasonably understand it otherwise here; *I am the true Vine*, that is the Church, which is founded on the belief of my Gospel, is the only true Church, which God now owns; He having rejected the *Jewish Synagogue*, as proving a *degenerate Vine*. Especially when we consider, that Christ himself applies the Parable of the Vineyard to the State of the Gospel, *Math.* 21. 33. *&c.* and the Christian Church is called *an Olive Tree*, and the members of it expressly called *branches*, *Rom.* 11. 17, 18. which metaphor hath the very same nature and signification *with the Vine and branches.*

Secondly, Because God is called the Husband-man, who takes care to dress this Vine, which cannot be understood of Christ, but of the Church, which is therefore called *God's Husbandry.*

Thirdly, Christ speaks of such *branches in him*, as bear no fruit; now there can be no such branches in the *Person of Christ*; for *our very Union to his Person* (as those men acknowledge, who talk of such *an Union of Persons between Christ and believers*) will make us fruitful: and therefore being *in him* can

can signifie no more, than being *members of his visible Church*, which is made up of Hypocrites, as well as sincere Christians.

But fourthly, To confirm all this, and to prevent objections, it is evident from this very Chapter, that when Christ speaks in the first Person, *I* and *In me*, he cannot mean this of his *own Person*, but of his *Church, Doctrine, and Religion*, according as the circumstances of the place require, thus in the 5. *Ver. I am the true Vine, ye are the branches, he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit, for without me ye can do nothing.* I would willingly learn what sense can be made of this, if we understand it of the *Person of Christ*: for it is not very intelligible, how we can *be* or *abide in* the *Person* of Christ, and it is more unintelligible still, how *we* can be in the *Person* of Christ, and the *Person* of Christ at the *same time be in Us*; which is a new piece of Philosophy called Penetration of dimensions; and that our fruitfulness should depend upon such an *Union to the Person* of Christ, is as hard to my understanding, as all the rest.

But if by *He* that abideth *in me*, we understand the *Christian Church*, he who makes a publick and visible profession of Faith in me, and continues in Society with those, who do so; and by *I in* him, the *Christian Doctrine*, both the sense, and Reason of it is very evident: the sense is this; That Church, which owns my Doctrine and Religion, is the *true Vine*, and all you, who make a publick profession of Faith *in me* (of a belief of my Gospel) and live in Communion with one another, are the *branches* in this Vine; and whoever of you continue stedfast in this profession and Communion, and do not only make a visible profession of Faith in me, but suffer my Doctrine and Precepts to dwell and abide in you, to govern your will and affections, and to direct your Conversation in the World, all such of you will be very fruitful in good works, for without such a sincere and hearty belief of my Gospel, it is impossible, you should do any thing, that is good.

So that to *abide in Christ* is to make a publick and visible profession of Faith in Christ, to be the members of his visible Church; but because many

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are ſo, who do not much credit their profeſſion, (being branches in him that bear not fruit) hence to diſtinguiſh all true Chriſtians from ſuch Hypocritical Profeſſors, he adds, *and I in you*, that is my words abide in you. *Ver.* 7. if my Doctrines and Precepts take faſt hold of your wills and affections, they will make you fruitful in good works.

Thus you ſee, that the Union of particular Chriſtians to Chriſt conſiſts in their Union to the Chriſtian Church: And hence it is, that the Ancient Fathers interpret all thoſe Metaphors, which decypher the *Union between Chriſt and Chriſtians*, to ſignifie the *entire love and Unity of Chriſtians among themſelves*. Thus St. *Chryſoſt.* expounds *Eph.* 2. 19, 20, 21. where the Apoſtle ſpeaks of *that ſpiritual building, which is erected on the foundation of the Prophets and Apoſtles, Jeſus Chriſt being the chief Corner Stone*, to ſignifie the Unity of the Church in all Ages; that both the Jewiſh and Chriſtian Church are united in Chriſt, as the ſeveral parts of the building are kept together by the Corner Stone; and St. *Ambroſe* to the ſame purpoſe tells us, *duos populos in ſe ſuſcepit ſalvator, & fecit unum in*

Domino, sicut & lapis angularis duos parietes continet in unitate domûs firmatos. i. e. *That Christ united two people in himself (the Jew and Gentile) and made them one in the Lord, as the Corner Stone unites two Walls in a building, and makes it but one House.* Which is the plain design of the place to prove, that Christ hath taken away the enmity and distance, which was between the Jew and Gentile, and *hath reconciled them both to God in one body by the Cross, Ver.* 16.

Thus St. *Chrysost.* observes on 1 *Cor.* 3. 9. that the Apostle to dissuade them from Schisms and Factions tells them, θεοῦ οἰκοδομή ἐστε, εἰ γὰρ οἰκοδομή ἐστε, οὐ χρὴ διασπᾶσθαι, &c. *That they were Gods building, and if they were Gods building, they must not be torn asunder, for then they are no longer a building; and if they were Gods Husbandry, they must not be divided from each other, but they must be one enclosure, hedged and walled in by Unity and agreement.* And adds, *let us therefore be built on Christ, and cleave to him as to a foundation, and as a branch to the Vine; that there may be no distance between Christ and us to interrupt this Union, for if there be, we immediately perish;*

periſh; for the branch draws nouriſhment and fatneſs from the Vine by its Union to it, and the building ſtands firm by the ſtrong adheſion of its parts. Which plainly ſignifies, that our *Union to Chriſt* conſiſts in our *Union to the Chriſtian Church*, and when we divide and ſeparate from the Church, we are broken off from Chriſt, as a branch is from the Vine; we are then like a building, whoſe ſtones fall aſunder, and deſtroy the whole fabrick.

Thus the *ſame Father* argues on *John* 14. 21. to perſwade Chriſtians to Peace and Unity: ἡ γὰρ διὰ πολλῶν ἡμᾶς ὑποδειγμάτων ἑνοῖ; *&c. for he (Chriſt) unites us to each other by many examples and patterns of the cloſeſt Union; He is the Head, and we the body, and the whole body by the Union of its ſeveral parts muſt be firmly united to the head; He is the foundation, we the building; He the Vine, We the branches; He the Husband, We his Spouſe; He the Shepherd, We his Sheep; He the way, we thoſe who are to walk in that way; We are a Spiritual Temple, and He it is, who dwells in us; He is the firſt born, we his Brethren; He the Heir, we fellow Heirs with him; He the life, we thoſe who live by him; He*

the Resurrection, we those who rise with him; He the light, and we are all enlightned by him; ταῦτα πάντα ἕνωσιν ἐμφάινει, καὶ οὐδὲν μέσον κενὸν ἀφίησιν εἶναι, οὐδὲ τὸ μικρότατον. *All these metaphors describe the neareſt and cloſeſt Union of Chriſtians to each other, and of all to Chriſt, which will not admit of the leaſt diſtance and ſeparation:* ſo that according to the ſenſe of this *Holy man*, particular Chriſtians are united to Chriſt by means of their Union to the Chriſtian Church, otherwiſe I cannot underſtand how our Union to Chriſt can be an argument to Unity and Concord among our ſelves, if we are immediately united to the *Perſon of Chriſt*, without being firſt united to his *Church*. Which I wiſh thoſe men would ſeriouſly conſider, who boaſt ſo much of their *Union to Chriſt*, and yet *rend his Church* into a thouſand little factions, tear the members of his body from each other, and yet pretend to be united to the head, make new encloſures in the Huſbandry, and Vineyard of God, and when Chriſt hath broken down the middle Wall of Partition, and made Jews and Gentiles but one Church, do now erect more Partition Walls in the *Chriſtian*, than

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ever were in the *Jewiſh Temple.*

But we need not depend on Authority for the confirmation of this notion, that the Union of particular Chriſtians with Chriſt, conſiſts in their Union with the Chriſtian Church; for thoſe *Sacraments* our Saviour hath Inſtituted, as *Symbols of our Union with him*, are a plain demonſtration of it: Our firſt undertaking of Chriſtianity is repreſented in our *Baptiſm*, wherein we make a publick profeſſion of our Faith in Chriſt; and it is ſufficiently known, that Baptiſm is the *Sacrament of our admiſſion into the Chriſtian Church*; and if any one ſhould deny this we have the Authority of St. *Paul* for the proof of it. 1 *Cor.* 12, 13. *For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body*; In which the Apoſtle ſeems to allude to Baptiſm, which confers the ſame holy Spirit on us all, and thereby makes us all members of that *one body* of Chriſt, which is his Church; but more expreſly in *Eph.* 4. 4, 5. *There is one Body, and one Spirit, as you are called in one hope of your Calling, one Lord, one Faith, one Baptiſm*; that is, the Chriſtian Baptiſm is but one, and is a Sacrament of Union, making us all the members

members of that one body of Christ; this is called being *Baptized into Christ, i. e.* admitted into the Christian Church by a publick profession of our Faith in Christ.

Thus the *Lords Supper* is a Sacrament of Union, and signifies that near Conjunction between *Christ* and the *Christian Church*, and the mutual fellowship of one Christian with another: hence the Apostle calls the *Cup of Blessing* the *Communion of the blood of Christ*, and *the Bread* the *Communion of the body of Christ*; *for we being many are one bread and one body* (one body represented by this one bread) *for we are all partakers of that one bread.* 1 *Cor.* 10. 16, 17.

For the Intention of our Lord and Saviour in what he did and suffer'd for us was, not meerly to reform and save some single Persons but, to erect a Church and to combine all his Disciples into a publick Society, to unite them by holy Mysteries, and to engage them to a mutual discharge of all Christian offices, whereby the *whole body may edifie it self in love*; and therefore our Saviour does not owne any relation to particular men, as such, but as they are members of his body,

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for he is the *Saviour of the body*, and *Redeemed his Church with his own blood.*

Hence St. *John* tells us in his first *Ep. Ch.* 1. *Ver.* 3. *That which we have ſeen and heard* (the whole Doctrine and Hiſtory of the Goſpel) *declare we unto you, that you alſo may have fellowſhip with us, and truly our fellowſhip is with the Father, and with his Son Jeſus Chriſt.* Firſt, that ye may have *fellowſhip with us*, become *members of the Church of Chriſt*, by which means you have fellowſhip and Communion with God and Chriſt.

And therefore thoſe publick cenſures, whereby rotten or dead members are cut of from the body of Chriſt, conſiſt in caſting ſuch perſons out of the Society of Chriſtian people, in debarring them from the Communion of Prayers and Sacraments, and all Religious offices, which is a plain demonſtration, that our Union to Chriſt is not an Union to his *Perſon* (of which more hereafter) but conſiſts in a ſincere and ſpiritual Communion with the *Chriſtian Church*; otherwiſe this external Communion with the Church could be no viſible ſignification of our Union to Chriſt, nor could our exciſion from the viſible Church ſignifie our ſeparation from him.

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III. But thirdly, It will be requisite now to explain more particularly the nature of this Union between Christ and the Christian Church, which is not a natural, but a *Political* Union, that is such an Union, as is between *a Prince* and *his Subjects*: Christ is *a spiritual King*, and all Christians are his *Subjects*, and our Union to Christ consists in our belief of his Revelations, obedience to his Laws, and subjection to his Authority: Hence our Saviour tells the Jews, *if you continue in my words, then are ye my Disciples indeed*, John 8. 31. which is the same thing *with being in him:* and by *keeping his Commandments we abide in his love*, *John* 15. 10. & 14. 21. and *to have his word abide in us* is a description of the closest and firmest Union to him *John* 15. 7. As obedience to our Prince is the strongest bond of a Political Union, which is dissolved and broken by disobedience and Rebellion. Thus our Saviour calls himself a *shepherd* and Christians his *sheep*. *John* 10. to signifie that Authority he hath over his Church, which bears some Analogy to the government of a *shepherd*, which is oft-times used as a name of power and Authority;

thority; as God is ſtyled the *Shepherd of Iſrael*, *Pſalm* 80. 1. and *Kings* are frequently called *Shepherds* both by prophane and ſacred Writers. Though this name is moſt commonly given to *Prophets*, who feed and inſtruct the Church, which includes power and Authority; and ſo does very properly belong to our Saviour, who erected this ſpiritual Kingdom on the Foundation of his Doctrine and Laws, and by the exerciſe of his prophetical office: for which Reaſon he is called the *Shepherd and Biſhop of our Souls.*

Thus he is called a *Head* and the Church his *Body*, a *Husband* and the Church his *Spouſe*, which two metaphors ſignifie the ſame thing, and are both of them names of power and Authority; as appears from *Eph.* 5. 23. *&c. For Husbands are ſaid to be the head of their Wives, as Chriſt is the head of the Church, and are commanded to love their Wives, as their own bodies, as Chriſt loves his Church:* ſo that a *Husband*, as a *Husband* repreſents the *head*, and the *Wife* the *body*; and what the meaning of all this is, the Apoſtle plainly tells us: that Chriſt is called the *Head* and *Husband*, becauſe he hath

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the Rule and Government of us, and therefore exhorts *Wives to be subject to their Husbands as the Church is subject unto Christ the Spiritual Head, v.* 24. For because the Head in the natural body hath the command and government of all the members; hence *Head* is a common name for Princes and Governours, *Deutr.* 28. 13. *The Lord shall make thee the Head and not the Tayl, and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath,* that is, thou shalt rule and govern; *Psalm.* 18. 43. *Thou hast made me the Head of the Heathen, and a people whom I have not known shall serve me.* And therefore the Apostles always expound this metaphor of Christ's being a *Head* by *power and Authority. Eph.* 1. 20, 21, 22. *Hath set him at his own right hand in Heavenly places, far above all Principalities and Powers ---- and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be Head over all things to the Church, which is his body.* Col. 1. 18. *And he is the Head of the body, the Church, who is the beginning, the first born from the dead, that in all things, he might have the preheminence:* ἵνα γένηται ἐν πᾶσιν αὐτὸς πρωτεύων; that is that he might not only

only excel other things, but that he might rule and govern them; for so πρωτεύων signifies him, who hath the first place of Authority; *because government is naturally entailed on the greatest excellency and perfection.* Thus Christ is the *Head of all Principalities and powers*, that is their Lord and Governour. *Col.* 2. 10. This is the true explication of this relation betwixt Christ and his Church. He is the *Head and Husband*, because he is invested with Authority to govern; and the Church is *his body and Spouse*, because it must be obedient to his Laws, and subject to his Government: as we know it is very familiar to call a Society of men, who live under the same Laws and Civil Government, a *body Politic*, which signifies their subjection to the same Authority, as a body hath but one Head; and that regard they must have to the preservation of the whole, and their mutual care of each other, as members of the same body.

Now the true Reason why this spiritual Kingdom of Christ is described by the Authority of a Shepherd over his Sheep, and of a Head and Husband over his body and Spouse, is to signifie

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the mildneſs and gentleneſs of his government, and that great and near concern he hath for the welfare of his Church: that he governs his Church with the care and tenderneſs of a Shepherd: that he defends and ranſoms his Church with his own blood, as a *good Shepherd lays down his life in defence of his sheep. John* 10. That he loves his Church with the natural kindneſs of a *Head or Husband*; that his Government is only for the good of his Church, not for his own private advantage; as a kind Huſband exerciſeth no other Authority over his Wife, but what is for *her* good, as well as *his own*; or as the *Head* hath no other concern; but that all *his members* be preſerved in their natural State and vigour, and perform their proper and natural offices; and therefore we may be ſecure, that *his yoak is eaſie, and his burden light*; that he will be gentle in his Diſcipline, and favourable in his cenſures; eſpecially when we conſider how dearly he hath purchaſt this relation to his Church, *that he gave himſelf for it, that he might ſanctifie and cleanſe it with the waſhing of water by the word. Eph.* 5. 25, 26. Upon which account

we may well be called the Members of his Body, of his Fleſh, and of his Bones, verſ. 30. the Church being, as it were, taken out of his crucified Body, as the Woman was taken out of the Man; as *Chriſt is ſaid to have reconciled the Gentiles* (that is, taken them into his Church) *in the body of his fleſh through death*, Col. 1. 21, 22. becauſe the Covenant of Grace, which is the Foundation of the Chriſtian Church, and receives Gentiles as well as Jews, was ſealed with the blood of Chriſt; ſo that the Church is taken out of the crucified body of Chriſt, which in the myſtical ſenſe anſwers to the Womans being taken out of the Man, which ſeems to be the Apoſtles meaning in that place. For the ſame reaſon Chriſt owns himſelf our Friend, *Joh.* 15. 14. *Ye are my friends, if you do whatſoever I command you*: which does not ſignifie ſuch an equality betwixt *Chriſt* and *us*, as there is betwixt friends, nor encourage any rudeneſs and unbecoming familiarity in our addreſſes to him; but acquaints us with the nature of his government, that he will rule his Church with the ſame care and tenderneſs, which one friend expreſſeth to another.

So that all this is a description of the state of the Gospel, in which our Lord and Master is our Shepherd, our Head and Husband, our Friend and Saviour, who hath redeemed and purchased us with his own blood, who laid the Foundation of his spiritual Kingdom in the most surprising and astonishing goodness, and exerciseth his authority in all the methods of love and compassion. Upon which account God also hath now laid aside in a great measure that severe name of a *King*, and calls himself our *Father*, to assure us of his fatherly care and government, and to signifie that liberty of Sons we now enjoy under the Gospel in opposition to the bondage and servitude of the Law of *Moses*.

But then we must observe farther, that though Christ be our Lord and Governour, he doth not govern us immediately by himself, for He is ascended up into Heaven, where he powerfully intercedes for his Church, and by a vigilant Providence superintends all the affairs of it, but hath left the visible and external conduct and government of his Church to *Bishops* and *Pastors*, who preside in his name, and by his

his authority: in the first Ages of Christianity, Christ conferred such extraordinary gifts on men, as qualified them for so great an office, *Eph.* 4. 8. &c. But though these miraculous gifts ceased, when the Gospel was fully published and sufficiently confirmed, yet the offices still continue for the instruction and government of the Church, though managed in more ordinary and humane ways. Christ now governs his Church by men, who are invested with his authority: which is a plain demonstration of what I discoursed above, that the Union of particular Christians to Christ, is by their Union with the Christian Church; which consists in their regular subjection to their spiritual Guides and Rulers, and in concord and unity among themselves. For if our Union to Christ consists in our subjection to him as our *Lord* and *Master*, *our Head* and *Husband*; and this authority is not immediately exercised by *Christ himself*, but by the *Bishops* and *Pastors* of the Church; it necessarily follows, that we cannot be united to Christ, that is, cannot owne his authority and government, till we unite our selves to the

publick Societies of Christians, and submit to the publick Instructions, Authority, and Discipline of the Church, as no man can be said to submit himself to his Prince, who denies subjection to those subordinate Magistrates, who act by his Princes Commission: for the Union of Bodies Politick (such as the Christian Church is) consists in Order and Government, when all the Members keep their proper places, and are knit to each other by a faithful discharge of their several offices and trusts: Schismaticks are in the Church, just as Rebels are in the Kingdom, not as part of it, but as open and profest Enemies: but the Apostle tells us wherein the Unity of the Church consists in *Eph.* 4. 16. *Christ is the Head, from whom the whole body fitly joyned together and compacted by that, which every joynt supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body to the edifying of it self in love.* That is, the supreme power is invested in Christ as Head, to whom the Church is obedient and subject, but to make this Union firm and lasting, there must be a regular subordination of the several Members,

Members, and a mutual discharge of all Christian offices, which is the most effectual way to advance their spiritual growth in all Christian graces, and especially to increase that love and friendship, which is the very life and soul of the Church: This indeed supposes a *visible Society of Christians*, professing the Faith of Christ, and living in communion with each other; for if there be no such visible Society (as it may happen in times of persecution, or some great degeneracy of the Church) it must of necessity alter the case: our Union to Christ then consists in an acknowledgment of his Authority and Subjection to his Laws, which makes us Members of the *Universal Church*, though there be no *particular Church* to communicate with: but when there is a visible Church, we are under the necessary obligations of a *visible Communion*, because herein *our subjection to the Authority of Christ*, and consequently *our Union* to him, consists.

And this by the way gives a plain account of the only cause, that can justifie our separation from any Society of Christians: for our Union with the Christian Church being the Medium

of our Union to Christ, while the Church, we live in, acknowledges the Authority, and submits to the Laws of Christ, we are bound to live in Communion with it, because this unites us to Christ. When nothing is made the condition of our Communion, which is expressly forbid by the Laws of our supreme Lord, we acknowledge his Authority in our subjection to our spiritual Guides; and we disowne his Authority in disowning and affronting theirs; as our Saviour tells his Apostles, *He that heareth you, heareth me, and he that despiseth you, despiseth me, and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me*, Luk. 10. 16. But when any Church prevaricates in the Laws of Christ, corrupts his Religion, and undermines the fundamental design of it, which is to make men good and vertuous, when we cannot obey our spiritual Rulers without disobeying the expres Laws of Christ, the reason of our Communion with such a Church ceases, because it doth not answer (nay contradicts) the end of Christian Society, which is to *have fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ*. For in this case we

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cannot owne their authority, but we must renounce the authority of our Head and Husband: now as it is in an Army, should any Captain revolt from his Prince, the Souldiers under his Command are not bound to turn Rebels, because their Leader is so; or should a whole Troop or Regiment conspire in the Treason, no particular Souldier is obliged to continue in the Company, or submit to the Government of Rebels, no more than he is obliged to be a Rebel; the same reason holds good as to Christian Societies; if any particular Church apostatize from the Faith of Christ, we are then under the same necessity of deserting their Communion, as we are of obeying the Laws, and submitting to the Authority of our Lord and Master; but nothing less than this can justifie a separation; while the Church is subject to Christ, we must be subject to the Church; while the fundamental Laws of his spiritual Kingdom are observed, and his Institutions revetenced, and the great ends of his Religion advanced, to separate from such a Church is to separate from the Body of Christ; for our Union to Christ consists in a sub-

jection to his Authority, and it is plain, that we disowne his Authority, when we reject those, who act by his Authority.

Now this Political Union betwixt Christ and his Church may be either only *external* and *visible*, and so *hypocrital Professors* may be said to be united to Christ, or *true* and *real*, which imports the truth and sincerity of our obedience and subjection to our Lord and Master: For since Christianity is become the Religion of Nations, and is entailed on us by our Ancestors as part of our inheritance, is received into the Laws and Constitutions of Kingdoms, and made a great Instrument of Civil Government, it is too often seen, that many men undertake this Profession only as the Mode and Fashion of their Country, to avoid singularity, and to serve a worldly interest; And thus the Christian Church is filled with *Hypocrites* and *visible Professors*, who are great Strangers to the life and spirit of the *Holy Jesus*; while some under the name of Christians practise all the villanies of the Heathen World, and live in a publick defiance to the Laws of that Religion they pretend

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to owne; others make a fair ſhow of external conformity to the Laws and Conſtitutions of this ſpiritual Kingdom, and conceal their impurities under ſome glorious and pompous form of Religion, and paſs for very good Chriſtians, when they are no better than diſguiſed Hypocrites; and this makes it neceſſary to diſtinguiſh between a meer *external* and *real* Union, between thoſe, who do no more than make a viſible profeſſion of Chriſtianity, and thoſe who are true and ſincere Chriſtians.

Earthly Princes can exact only an external conformity to their Laws, becauſe they can take no cognizance of the ſecret workings of mens minds, and the end of their Government is attained in the preſervation of publick peace and order; But the ſpiritual Kingdom of our Lord is of another nature, which requires not only an external and viſible ſubjection to Chriſt our Head and Huſband, and a viſible Union to the Chriſtian Church, but the homage and obedience of the Soul, the government of our thoughts and paſſions, the renovation of our minds and ſpirits, *We muſt be born a-*

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gain of Water and of the Spirit, if we would enter into the Kingdom of God, *Joh.* 3. 5. That is, before we can be the Disciples of Christ, the Subjects of his spiritual Kingdom, which is in Scripture called the *Kingdom of God*, and *the Kingdom of Heaven*; *we must be born of water*, must make a publick profession of our Faith in Christ, and obedience to Him in our Baptism: but this is not sufficient, unless we be *born of the Spirit* too, that is, unless our minds and spirits become subject to Christ, unless our Faith in Christ, and subjection to Him, be sincere and hearty, do govern all the motions and desires of our Souls, and make us really such, as we pretend to be; which is called *Being born of the Spirit*, because all Christian Graces and Vertues are in Scripture attributed to the Spirit of God as the Author of them. Hence the Apostle tells us, that *In Christ Jesus nothing availeth but a new Creature*, that is, that none are true Subjects of Christ, such as shall be rewarded by Him, but those whose minds and spirits are transformed into the love of vertue and goodness.

Now as a visible Profession of Christianity

ſtianity is the Foundation of this external-political Union betwixt Chriſt and his Church; ſo this new Nature is the Foundation of a *real* and *ſpiritual* Union, and this the Scripture repreſents to us under ſeveral notions. Firſt, by the ſubjection of our minds and ſpirits to Chriſt, as our ſpiritual King, when we put our Souls as well as Bodies under his Government and Conduct: hence Chriſt is ſaid *to dwell in our hearts by faith*, *Eph.* 3. 17. that is, to have the ſole Command and Empire of our wills and affections, to govern our hearts, as a man does the houſe, in which he dwells. And thus all thoſe Metaphors, which ſignifie our ſubjection to Chriſt, muſt be expounded of the ſubjection of our Souls and Spirits to Him, as well as the outward conformity of our actions; becauſe Chriſt is a ſpiritual King, who rules and governs hearts, as earthly Princes govern the bodies of their Subjects: our ſubjection to him ought to begin in the Soul, in a ſincere acknowledgment of his Power and Authority, in a ſtedfaſt belief of his Doctrines and Revelations, and in a chearful and willing obedience to his Laws; ſuch a ſubjection

jection as a Wife ought to yield to her Husband, and Members to their Head, the effect of a free choice, not a feigned or forced compliance.

Secondly, By a participation of the same nature, which is the necessary effect of the subjection of our minds to him: for the Gospel of our Saviour is the truest image of his mind, he transcribed his own nature into his Laws, and therefore a sincere obedience to his Laws is a conformity to his Nature. Hence is that exhortation, *That the same mind be in us, which was in Christ Jesus*, Phil. 2. 5. and to be his Disciples is *to learn of him, who was meek and lowly in mind*, Matth. 11.29. Hence also our Union to Christ is described by having the *Spirit of Christ*. Rom. 8. 9. *If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his*; that is, unless he have the same temper and disposition of mind which Christ had, which is called *having the Spirit of Christ* by an ordinary figure of the cause for the effect, for all those vertues and graces, wherein our conformity to Christ consists, are called the fruits of the Spirit, *the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth*,

truth, *Eph.* 5. 9. and therefore what the Apoſtle in that place calls, *having the Spirit of Chriſt*, in the next verſe he expreſſes by *if Chriſt be in you*: *i. e.* if you be poſſeſt with the ſame love of vertue and goodneſs, which appeared ſo eminently in him; which is much to the ſame ſenſe with that expreſſion, *of Chriſts being formed in you.* Gal. 4. 19. *My little Children of whom I travel in birth again, till Chriſt be formed in you*: that is, till you be thoroughly inſtructed in the Doctrine and Religion of Chriſt, and are thereby moulded into his likeneſs and image. Hence in the 1 *Cor.* 6. 17. the Apoſtle tells us, *He that is joyned to the Lord is one Spirit*: that is, herein conſiſts our Union to Chriſt, that we have the ſame temper of mind which he had; for there can be no Union betwixt Souls and Spirits without this, that they are acted by the ſame Principles, and love, and chuſe the ſame things: bodies are united by an external adheſion of parts, but Souls by an harmony and conſent of wills. This makes two *one Spirit*, when there is a perfect likeneſs of diſpoſition, when they agree in the ſame deſigns as much, as if the

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same Soul animated them both: when we love God and men, as our Saviour did, when we are meek and humble, and patient and contented, as he was, we are as closely united to him, as if he dwelt in us, and we in him: as if we had but *one spirit* in us both.

But Thirdly, there is a closer Union still, which results from this, which consists in a mutual and reciprocal love. When we are transformed into the image of Christ, he loves us, as being like to him, and we love him too, as partaking of his nature. He loves us as the price of his blood, as his own workmanship created to good works, and we love him as our Redeemer and Saviour. Now love is the great Cement of Union, which unites interests, and thereby does more firmly unite hearts: hence when our Saviour had told his Disciples, *At that day ye shall know, that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you,* Joh. 14. 20, he explains the meaning of it in v. 21. *He that hath my Commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me, and he that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him and manifest my self unto him.* That is, God and Christ,

Christ, and Christians are all united by a mutual and reciprocal love, founded on a likeness of dispositions and actions, on obedience to those Laws, which are but a Copy of the *Original Holiness of God*, and of the *life of Christ*. To the same purpose Christ prays for his Disciples, *Joh.* 17. 21. *that they may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.* Which refers to their agreement in doctrine and love. Thus according to the Scripture phrase love makes us one with God and Christ, and with each other.

Fourthly, This Union is expresst in Scripture by resembling the Christian Church to *Gods Temple*, wherein he dwells, as formerly he did in the Temple at *Jerusalem*: while that typical and ceremonial Worship was in force, God was pleased to dwell in a Temple made with hands, there he placed the Symbols of his Presence, from thence he gave forth his Oracles, there he received their Sacrifices and Oblations, and returned an answer to their prayers. But since Christ hath introduced a more manly and spiritual Worship, God dwells no longer in a Temple of

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wood and stones, by such visible signs of his presence, as formerly he did, but hath chosen the society of devout minds and pure souls for the place of his residence and abode. Thus in the 1 *Cor.* 3. 16. *Know you not, that ye are the Temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you:* and *Chap.* 6. *vers.* 19. *Know you not, that your body is the Temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God:* and 2 *Cor.* 6. 16. *Ye are the Temple of the living God, as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in (or among) them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.* To the same purpose we find in *Rev.* 21. 3. that after the description of the *Holy City*, the *New Jerusalem coming down from God out of Heaven*, which signifies the state of the *Christian Church*, there was heard a great voice out of Heaven, saying, *Behold the Tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.* Now all this must be expounded in allusion to the *Temple* at *Jerusalem*: that as the *Temple* was the place of Gods peculiar presence with that people,

ple, signifying that he was always ready at hand to assist them in their distress, to supply their wants, to defend them from their enemies, to hear all the pious prayers they put up to him: that is, *that he would be their God, and they should be his people*, as the Apostle expounds it; thus it is now with the Christian Church, they are the only society of men, whom God hath a peculiar regard for, with whom he is always present, whom he protects and defends by a vigilant and more particular providence, whom he hath chosen for his peculiar people to dwell among them.

And as in the Temple God placed the Mercy-seat and the Cherubims as Emblems of his Majesty and Presence, for which reason he is so often said *to dwell betwixt the Cherubims*: so he hath now bestowed his *holy Spirit* on the Christian Church, which is a surer pledge of his dwelling among them, than those Types and Shadows were, as the Apostle speaks, *Know ye not, that ye are the Temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you*, or among you: that is, this is a sufficient evidence, that ye are the *Temple of*

God, in that God hath given his Spirit to dwell with you: which primarily refers to those extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, which God in that Age bestowed on the Christian Church: this was the true *Shechinah* or *divine glory* resting on them: for which reason he is called the *Spirit of Glory*, 1 Pet. 4. 14 *The Spirit of Glory and of God resteth on you*: that is, that Spirit of God, which is the visible manifestation of his glory in the Christian Church, of which that visible glory, which sometimes filled the Jewish Tabernacle, was an Emblem. Hence S. *Paul* tells us, that *the glory of the new Covenant, which is the ministration of the Spirit* (which was confirmed by such miraculous and plentiful effusions of the holy Spirit) *did far exceed the glory of the first Covenant, written and engraven in stones, though that was so glorious, that the Children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses, because of the glory of his countenance*, 2 *Cor.* 3. 7, 8. for this was a glorious manifestation of a divine Presence with the Church, that God did indeed dwell with them, and walk among them: and though these extraordinary

gifts are now ceased, yet the vertue and glory of them still remains, they are a lasting demonstration of Gods peculiar presence with his Church in all Ages, as they are of the truth of the Christian Religion: for the Christian Church in all Ages since Christ and his Apostles is but *one*, and therefore still inherits the glory as well as the Religion of former Ages. In allusion to this the *Christian Church* is called *Gods Building*, 1 *Cor.* 3. 9. and *Eph.* 2. 20, 21, 22. *and are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone, in whom all the building fitly framed together, groweth into an holy Temple in the Lord, in whom ye are also built together for an habitation of God through the Spirit:* ἐν πνεύματι, that is, a *Spiritual Temple* in opposition to the *material Temple* at *Jerusalem*, which S. *Peter* calls οἶκος πνευματικὸς, a *spiritual House* or *Temple*, 1 *Pet.* 2. 5. all which refers to this notion, that the *Christian Church* is *Gods Temple* wherein he dwells.

Now though all this do most properly belong to the Christian Church, as a spiritual Society; that they are

the Temple of the living God: yet it is accommodated in Scripture to particular Christians: and *Philo* also alludes to it, ἡ γὰρ τοῦ σοφοῦ καὶ ἀγαθοῦ διάνοια τῷ ὄντι βασίλειον καὶ οἶκος θεοῦ ἐστιν ἱερώτατος, *that the mind of a wise and good man is in truth and reality the Palace and Temple of God:* every devout Soul is Gods Temple wherein he dwells: an enlightned mind, which is stored with all the treasures of divine wisdom and knowledge, is his *Debir* or Oracle: a pure heart is his Altar, and devout prayers are spiritual incense and sweet perfumes: the body it self is a consecrated place, and is also called the Temple of God, which must therefore be preserved pure and undefiled, 1 *Cor.* 6. 19. nay our bodies are *Sacrifices* too, which we must offer up to God by devoting them to his service, *Rom.* 12. 1. for the Scripture loves to allude to the *Temple*, and *Altar*, and *Sacrifices* of the Law, which in a moral sense may very well be accommodated to the Christian Worship and Service, as in their Typical signification they prefigured Christ, whose *Body* was the *true Temple*, where the *Divine Glory* dwelt, who was both Priest and Sacrifice, and by his death

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put an end to that Typical Diſpenſation; only we may obſerve, that when the Scripture mentions Gods or Chriſts dwelling with particular Chriſtians, it uſes a more familiar ſtyle, and ſeems rather to allude to a *private houſe*, than a *publick Temple*: Thus in *Joh* 14. 23. *If any man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him:* and *Rev.* 3. 20. *Behold I ſtand at the door and knock, if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and ſup with him, and he with me.*

This is all I can find in Scripture concerning the Union betwixt Chriſt and Chriſtians, and that this is the true account of it (beſides what hath been already urged) will evidently appear from thoſe Inſtitutions of our Saviour, which are the Inſtruments and Symbols of our Union to him, which we commonly call *Sacraments, Baptiſm and the Lords Supper:* which repreſent and ſignifie both our external and real Union with him.

Firſt our external Union: Thus Baptiſm is a publick profeſſion of the Chriſtian Religion, that we believe the

Gospel of Christ, owne his Authority, and submit to his Government: We are baptized *in the Name of Christ*, that is, we publickly owne him for our Instructor and Governour, to believe whatever he hath taught, and to do whatever he hath commanded. And the Lords Supper is a fœderal Rite which answers to the Feasts on Sacrifices under the Law, whereby we renew our Covenant with our Lord, and vow obedience and subjection to him: hence these Institutions were by the Ancients called *sacraments*, in allusion to that Oath which Souldiers took to be true and faithful to their Prince, when they were listed into his Army, which was called *Sacramentum Militiæ* or the *Military Oath*; of this nature are *Baptism* and the *Lords Supper*, a Vow and Covenant to be subject to Christ as our Head and Husband, wherein our external and visible Union consists.

Secondly, They signifie also our real Union to Christ, thus Baptism signifies our profession of becoming new men, our profession of conformity to Christ in his Death and Resurrection, *We are buried with Christ by*

Baptiſm into death, that like as Chriſt was raiſed from the dead by the glory of the Father, even ſo we alſo ſhould walk in newneſs of life, Rom. 6. 4. that is Baptiſm, or our immerſion under water, according to the ancient Rite of adminiſtring it, is a figure of our burial with Chriſt, and of our conformity to his death, and ſo ſignifies our dying to ſin, and walking in newneſs of life: for the death of Chriſt muſt be conſidered, not barely as a natural death, a ſeparation of ſoul and body, but as a Sacrifice for ſin to deſtroy the power and dominion of it, and ſo our dying to ſin (that is, ceaſing from the practice of it) is the trueſt conformity to the death of Chriſt; and we muſt conſider his Reſurrection, not only as his returning to life again, but as his living to God, his advancement into his ſpiritual Kingdom, the deſign of which is to promote the intereſt of Religion, and a divine life, and ſo our walking in newneſs of life (a vertuous and religious life) is our conformity to his Reſurrection, makes us the true Subjects of his ſpiritual Kingdom; which the Apoſtle tells us, gives us an abundant aſſurance of a glorious reſurre-

ction, that we shall in a proper sense rise with him; because this new life, wherein our spiritual Conformity to the resurrection of Christ consists, is an immortal principle of life, which can no more die, than Christ can die again, now he is risen from the dead. Thus Baptism is called *putting on Christ*, *Gal.* 3. 27. *He that is baptized into Christ hath put on Christ*: that is, hath engaged himself to be conformed to his image and likeness, to adorn his mind with all those vertues and Graces, which appeared in our Saviours life:

Thus the Lords Supper is a spiritual feeding on Christ, *eating his flesh and drinking his blood*, which signifies the most intimate Union with him, that *we are flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone*: *Eph.* 5. 30. That as we are redeemed by his Death and sufferings, are the purchase of his blood, and so as it were taken out of his Crucifyed body, as the Woman was taken out of the Man; so by this spiritual feeding on Christ we are transformed into the same nature with him as much as if we were of his flesh and bones. This is a Sacrament, wherein we celebrate the love of our dying Lord, and express

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our most passionate love and devotion to him; The memory of what he hath done and suffer'd for us, excites a just hatred of our sins, sincere purposes and resolutions of a new life, *to live to him, who died for us*; a great hope in God, who hath provided such a Sacrifice and Atonement, such a Mediator and Advocate for us; and a stedfast expectation of a future reward. This is eating the flesh and drinking the blood of Christ, when these visible figures of his Death and Sufferings affect our minds with such a strong and passionate sense of his love to us, and excite in us such a firm hope in God, as transforms us into a divine Nature; and this is our real Union to Christ, as you heard above.

Now I take it for granted, that there can be no better way to understand the nature of our Union to Christ, than to consider the nature of those Sacraments, which were designed as the Instruments and signs of our Union to him; and if we will take that account, the Scripture gives of them, all the Union they signifie, is only a publick and visible profession of our Faith in Christ, and subjection to him, as our

Lord

Lord and Saviour, and a sincere conformity of our hearts and lives to the nature and life of Christ.

IV. Fourthly, I observe further, that fellowship and Communion with God, according to the Scripture notion, signifies what we call a Political Union, that is, that to be in fellowship with God and Christ signifies to be of that Society, which puts us into a peculiar relation to God; that God is our Father, and we his Children, that Christ is our head and Husband, our Lord and Master, we his Disciples and followers, his Spouse, and his body: thus in *John* 1. 1. 3. *That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, that you also may have fellowship with us, and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ*: where I observe, that our fellowship with the Father and Son is first founded on our fellowship with the Christian Church, that is on our profession of the Faith of Christ, obedience to his Laws, subjection to his Government and Discipline, which he now visibly exerciseth by the Bishops and Pastors of the Church; this unites us into one Society, and body politick; and now by

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vertue of our fellowſhip with the Chriſtian Church, we have fellowſhip with Chriſt, who is the ſupreme Head and Governour of his Church, which is a plain argument, that all the Apoſtle means by fellowſhip with God and Chriſt is ſuch a Political Union, as is between a Prince and his Subjects, between Superiours and Inferiours in the ſame Society. Now (as you heard before)* if this profeſſion be only external and viſible, without the conformity of our hearts and lives to the laws of Chriſt, it gives us only an external fellowſhip, or relation to God and Chriſt; that is, ſuch men only appear to be in fellowſhip with Chriſt, maintaining a viſible fellowſhip with his Church, when in truth they are perfect ſtrangers to him, ſuch as Chriſt will not owne for his Diſciples, as the Apoſtle adds in *Ver. 6. 7. If we ſay, we have fellowſhip with him, and walk in darkneſs, we lye, and do not the truth, but if we walk in the light, as God is in the light, then have we fellowſhip one with another, &c.* That is, we abuſe our ſelves, if we hope, that God will owne himſelf our Father, and beſtow the inheritance of Children on us, while we

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live in sin; but when we join the practice of real righteousness with the visible profession of Christianity, then God will owne us for his Children, and Christ for the true members of his body. So that this fellowship with God and Christ is such a state and condition, as we are put into by a visible profession and sincere practice of Christianity, and that in short is, that we are united to God as his Sons and Children, and are united to Christ, as his Disciples, and members of his body, which intitles us to the Inheritance of Children and all the blessings of the Gospel.

Thus in the 1 *Cor.* 1. 9. *God is faithful, by whom ye are called into the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord:* where the fellowship of Christ can signifie no more than the fellowship of the Christian Church, whereof Christ is Lord and Head, and therefore the Apostle immediately adds in the next Verse, *Now I beseech you Brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ* (for the honour and reputation of Christ and his Religion) *that you all speak the same thing, that there be no divisions nor schisms among you, but that you be perfectly*

fully joyned together in the same mind, and in the same judgment. Where he argues from the nature of their Faith in Christ, to the obligations of Peace and Unity, which plainly evinces that this fellowship with Christ is that relation we stand in to him, as Members of the Christian Church, whereof he is Head.

And that the true notion of κοινωνία, which we render sometimes by Fellowship, sometimes by Communion, is as plain as we can wish, in 2 *Cor.* 6. 14. where the Apostle dissuades them from having any fellowship with Heathen Idolaters, from eating of their Sacrifices, &c. *Be ye not unequally yoked with unbelievers*, that is, have no society with those men, whose Religion is so contrary to yours, that you will be as uneasie to each other, as two Heifers in the same yoke, which draw different ways: *For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?* τίς μετοχὴ, what is there common between them, which they both alike partake of, as a foundation of union and concord? *What communion hath light with darkness?* τίς κοινωνία, which signifies the same thing, what is there common

common to them both? *What concord hath Christ with Belial? τις συμφωνησις*, what consent and harmony of mind to unite them into one fellowship? *What part hath he that believeth with an unbeliever? τις μερις*, which seems to refer to those portions of Sacrifices, which were distributed among them, as a Symbol of their Union to each other, and to the same God. How can a Believer and Unbeliever, a Christian and an Idolater have right to a part of the same Sacrifice? *What agreement hath the Temple of God with Idols? τις συγκαταθεσις*, what is there to unite them together in the same place; to reconcile the Temple of God with the Worship of Idols? All these expressions decypher to us the nature and foundation of fellowship; the nature of it consists in the union of things, which in rational Beings consists in mutual relations and common interests, and the foundation of it is a likeness of nature, and consent and harmony of wills; and therefore the Apostle explains our fellowship with God by our being the Temple of God, and that God dwells in us, and walks in us, *vers.* 16. 18.

Now

Now because the Lords Supper is the only Act which the Scripture mentions, whereby our fellowship with God and Christ in this World is expresst, hence it is called the κοινωνία, *or the Communion and fellowship*; 1 Cor. 10. 16. *The Cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the Communion of the blood of Christ? The Bread which we break, is it not the Communion of the body of Christ?* And why he calls it the Communion, appears from the following verses. First, because it signifies the Communion and fellowship of Christians with each other, that they are all Members of the Body of Christ, that they are all the Children of the same Father, as being entertained by him at the same Table, *vers.* 17.

And Secondly, It is a Communion also, as it signifies our fellowship with God. *vers.* 18. *Behold Israel after the flesh, are not they which eat of the Sacrifice partakers of the Altar?* The meaning of which is, that the Sacrifice which was offered upon the Altar, was reckoned as Gods meat, as the Temple was his house, and therefore those that eat of the Sacrifice, were entertained at Gods Table, which was a signification

tion of their fellowship with him, that he was their God, and they his people. Thus the Lords Supper is a Feast upon a Sacrifice, even that great and stupendious Sacrifice of the Body of Christ, which was offered upon the Cross; and therefore to eat the consecrated Bread, and drink the Wine, which are the figures of his Body and Blood, is to eat of that Sacrifice, that spiritual food God hath provided for us. Thus God entertains us at his Table, as his own Children, who are of his houshold and family, as the Members of Christ, who have a right to all the blessings of the new Covenant, which was sealed with his blood. This is the true Interpretation of all Feasts upon Sacrifice (such as the Lords Supper in an eminent manner is) that it is to eat of Gods food, and to be entertained at his Table, which is such an argument of our fellowship with God, as eating and drinking together is among men, always allowing for that infinite distance which is between God and us.

This is the only Act of Religion, which in Scripture signifies Communion and Fellowship, because it is the

most

moſt proper ſignification of our fellowſhip with God, and with each other; but prayer and meditation, and ſuch like Acts of Devotion, are no where called Communion with God, though a prevailing cuſtom hath in our days almoſt wholly appropriated that name to them; fellowſhip with God doth not conſiſt in tranſient Acts, but is a ſtate of life, that relation we ſtand in to God and Chriſt, and there is no Act of Religion, which doth properly ſignifie this fellowſhip with God but only eating at his Table: for you will not ſay, that a poor man enjoys communion and fellowſhip with his Prince, when he puts up a Petition to him to beg his charity, or praiſeth him for his clemency and bounty: to pray to God is an Act of Homage, which we owe him, as he is our Maker and Father, it is a duty which reſults from our relation to, and fellowſhip with God, but it is not in its own nature an act of fellowſhip and communion: which expreſſion I purpoſely avoid, not only becauſe it is improper, and hath thruſt out the true notion of our fellowſhip with God, and not only the notion but the practice of it too (for

certainly did men understand, what our fellowship with God is, they would not so much neglect the Lords Supper, which is the only Act whereby our Communion is expreſt) but also because men have abused it to great irreverence and familiarity with God in their addresses to him, while they fancy, that they are now acting the part of Gods Fellows, and therefore may talk to him with such freedom, as they use in common conversation.

I have discoursed these things at large, because they are too commonly mistaken: our Union to Christ hath been represented as a Riddle and Mystery, which no body can understand, the perfect knowledge of which must be reserved for the next World, or the coming of *Elias*; and the mistakes about it have had a bad influence upon all Religion, not only to confound the notions, but to debauch the practice of it. The sum of what I have already said is this; that those Phrases and Metaphors, which represent our Union to Christ, signifie our visible Society with the Christian Church, and our sincere practice of the Christian Religion: when we joyn in Communion with

with the Church of Christ, and live in a regular subjection to our spiritual Governours, and a mutual discharge of all Christian offices, when we profess to believe the Gospel, and to obey the Laws of our common Saviour, then we are visibly united to Christ, as Subjects to their Prince, and Members to their Head; and when this profession is sincere and hearty, when we really are what we pretend to be, then our Union to Christ is real and spiritual too. A visible and real Union to Christ differ as a visible Professor and sincere Christian, the one is a Christian only in show, the other is what he pretends to be: and this Union to Christ entitles us to his peculiar care and providence, to the influences of his Grace, to the power of his Intercession, transforms us into his nature and likeness, and makes us the Temple of God, wherein he delights to dwell. All this may be understood on this side Heaven, and without sending for *Elias* to unriddle it; and this is all the Scripture tells us of our Union to Christ.

SECT. II.

Of our Union to the Perſon of Chriſt.

I Know not whence it comes to paſs, that men love to make plain things obſcure, and like nothing in Religion but Riddles and Myſteries: God indeed was pleaſed to inſtitute a great many Ceremonies (and many of them of very obſcure ſignification) in the Jewiſh Worſhip, to awe their childiſh minds into a greater veneration of his Divine Majeſty. But in theſe laſt days God hath ſent his own Son into the World to make a plain, and eaſie, and perfect Revelation of his Will, to publiſh ſuch a Religion, as may approve it ſelf to our reaſon, and captivate our affections by its natural charms and beauties; and there cannot be a greater injury to the Chriſtian Religion than to render it obſcure and unintelligible: and yet too many there are, who deſpiſe every thing, which they underſtand, and think nothing a ſufficient tryal of their Faith, but

but what contradicts the ſenſe and reaſon of mankind. I might give you too many inſtances of this, but our preſent Argument may ſerve inſtead of many. There is nothing more eaſie to be underſtood than our *Union* and *Communion with Chriſt*, and it had certainly continued ſo, had not ſome men undertook to explain it, who have now made it *more than myſtical*, that is, an *unintelligible Union*; though indeed that is the leaſt fault, that it cannot be underſtood; for as they have ordered the matter, it is made to ſerve a great many evil purpoſes, and to overthrow the main Deſigns of Chriſtianity. And to make this appear, I ſhall as briefly and plainly, as the matter will bear, repreſent to you thoſe other opinions concerning our Union to Chriſt, which are now in great vogue in the World, and do very unjuſtly challenge to themſelves the name of *Goſpel-Myſteries*.

As firſt when we inquire what this Union betwixt Chriſt and Believers is, they anſwer *in general*, *that it is a myſtical Union through the Spirit and Faith*. This *Myſtical* is a hard word, and therefore to explain it, they tell Dr. Jacomb. on Rom. 8. pag. 42.

us, *that this myſtical Union is an Union*
Pag. 45. *of Perſons, where yet Perſons and Natures are diſtinct. As there is an Union of three Perſons in one Nature in the Trinity, and of two Natures in one Perſon in Chriſt,* which is the *Hypoſtatical* Union, ſo the *myſtical Union is an Union of Perſons, where both Perſons and Natures are diſtinct: and it is an Union of Perſons, but no Perſonal Union. The Perſon of Chriſt is united to the perſon of the Believer, and the perſon of the Believer is united to the Perſon of Chriſt* (as it muſt needs be where the Perſon of Chriſt is united to the perſon of the Believer) *which Union is made by Faith, which receives the Perſon of Chriſt, and therefore muſt unite to the Perſon of Chriſt* (I doubt that conſequence is not good, for men are not united to every thing they receive, but yet what follows may help it out) *as it is in the Marriage-Union, which joyns perſon to perſon.* This is not very clear yet, and therefore as a fuller explication of it, the ſame Author
Pag. 48. deſcribes it thus, *This myſtical Union is that ſupernatural, ſpiritual, intimous Oneneſs and Conjunction, which is betwixt the Perſon of Chriſt and the perſon*

of

of Believers, through the bonds of the Spirit and Faith, upon which there follows mutual and reciprocal Communion with each other. This Oneneſs and Conjunction are hard words ſtill, and therefore to explain them, you muſt obſerve, *that Chriſt and Saints are united, how? why in reſpect of that Oneneſs and Conjunction that is between them.* This now is as plain as one could wiſh, *they are one by their Oneneſs.* Union is Union, and Chriſt is Chriſt, and Believers are Believers, and Oneneſs is Oneneſs, and thus Chriſt and Believers are united by their Oneneſs.

But what are the bonds of this Union? (though it had been convenient firſt to have underſtood the Union better) *why they are the Spirit and Faith, the Spirit unites Chriſt to us, and Faith unites us to Chriſt:* and who can deny this to be a very myſtical Union? But beſides this *myſtical Union*, there *is a Legal or Law-Union betwixt Chriſt and Believers, as he is their ſurety and a moral Union, the foundation of which is Love* (of which more in its proper place) *and thus the Perſon of Chriſt and the perſon of Believers are united myſtically, legally, morally.* The deſign of

Pag. 49.

all these distinctions is to prove the Union of Persons betwixt Christ and Believers, and because I find this Author hath bewildred himself, I will endeavour to help him out; for it is a very plain case: if Christ and believers are united, their Persons must be united too; for the Person of Christ is Christ himself, and the Persons of believers are the believers themselves, and I cannot understand, how they can be united without their Persons, that is without themselves: but then they are united by mutual relations, as the Persons of a Prince and his Subjects, of a Husband and his Wife are united, or by mutual affections, or common Interest, not by a natural adhesion of Persons; but because I find it doth not satisfie these men, that Christ and believers are united, unless their Persons be united too, it makes me suspect that there is a greater Mystery in this *Union of Persons*, than every one apprehends; and therefore,

Secondly, Let us inquire, what they mean by the *Person of Christ*, to which believers must be united. And here they have out-done all the metaphysical subtilties of *Suarez*, and have found

out

out a *Perſon* for Chriſt diſtinct from his *Godhead* and *Manhood:* for there can be no other ſenſe made of what Dr. *Owen* tells us, *That by the Graces of his Perſon, he doth not mean the glorious excellencies of his Deity conſidered in it ſelf, abſtracting from the office, which for us as God and Man he undertook, nor the outward appearance of his humane nature neither, when he converſt here on Earth, nor yet as now exalted in glory; But the graces of the Perſon of Chriſt, as he is veſted with the office of Mediation; His ſpiritual eminency, comelineſs, beauty, as appointed and anointed by the Father unto that great work of bringing home all his Elect into his boſom.* Now unleſs the *Perſon of Chriſt as Mediator*, be diſtinct from his *Perſon*, as *God Man*, all this is idle talk; for what *Perſonal Graces* are there in Chriſt as *Mediator*, which do not belong to him either as God, or Man? there are ſome things indeed which our Saviour did and ſuffer'd, which he was not obliged to either as *God*, or *Man*, but as *Mediator*, but ſurely he will not call the peculiar duties and actions of an office, *Perſonal Graces.* His *Perſonal Graces* fitted him for the diſcharge of his *Mediatory* office,

Commun. with Chriſt pag. 51.

fice, but whatever *Personal Graces* are in Christ, belong to his *Person* still, are seated either in his Divine or Humane Nature, and he hath no *Personal Graces* as *Mediator*, which he hath not either as *God* or *Man*. And the *Doctor himself*, when he accommodates the Description, the Spouse gives of her Beloved, to Christ, tells us, *That he is white in the glory of his Deity, and ruddy in the preciousness of his humanity, because white is the complexion of glory, and ruddy is very applicable to his humanity, because man was called* Adam *from the red Earth, whereof he was made*; which are excellent proofs, but however *white and ruddy* belong to his divine and humane nature, and that without any regard to his *Mediatory office*, for *he had been white in the glory of his Deity, and ruddy with the red Earth of his humanity*, whether he had been consider'd as *Mediator*, or not. And in his first digression concerning the *excellency of Christ Jesus*, to invite us to Communion with him in a Conjugal relation, he tells us, *that Christ is exceeding excellent and desireable in his Deity, and the glory thereof, He is desireable and worthy our acceptation, as consider'd*

Ibid. p. 52.

Pag. 64.

conſider'd in his Humanity, in his freedom from ſin, and fulneſs of Grace, &c. Now though this look very like a contradiction to what he ſaid before, that by the *graces of his Perſon*, he meant neither the *excellencies of his divine, nor humane nature*, yet he hath a ſalvo, which will deliver him both from contradiction, and from ſenſe; *that he doth not conſider theſe excellencies of his Deity or Humanity, as abſtracted from his office of Mediator:* though he might, if he pleaſed, for he conſiders thoſe excellencies, which are not peculiar to the office of Mediation, but which would have belong'd to him, as God and Man whether he had been Mediator, or not: but what becomes of his diſtinction of the *Graces of Chriſts Perſon as Mediator, from the Graces of his Perſon as God and Man:* when there are no *Perſonal* Graces in Chriſt, but what belong to his *Deity* or *Humanity:* and then you can find no other *Perſon* to be the ſubject of theſe *Perſonal excellencies*, unleſs his *office of Mediation* muſt go for a *diſtinct Perſon*, which is a new kind of *hereſie*. But whatever becomes of the ſenſe of the diſtinction, there is a very deep ſetch in it, the obſerving

obſerving of which will diſcover the whole Myſtery of the *Perſon of Chriſt*, and *our Union to him:* for theſe men conſider, that Chriſt ſaves us, as he is our *Mediator*, and not meerly conſider'd as God or Man, and they imagine, that we receive Grace and Salvation from Chriſts Perſon, juſt as we do water out of a Conduit, or a gift and largeſs from a Prince; that it flows to us from our Union to his *Perſon*; And therefore they dreſs up the *Perſon of the Mediator* with all thoſe perſonal graces and excellencies, which may make him a fit Saviour, that thoſe, who are thus united to his *Perſon*, (of which more in the next Section) need not fear miſſing of Salvation: Hence they ranſack all the boundleſs perfections of the Deity, and whatever they can find or fancy, which ſpeaks any comfort to Sinners, this is preſently a *Perſonal Grace* of the Mediator: they conſider all the glorious effects of his Mediation, and whatever great things are ſpoken of his Goſpel or Religion, or Interceſſion for us, theſe ſerve as *Perſonal Graces* too; that all our hopes may be built, not on the *Goſpel Covenant*, but on the *Perſon of Chriſt:* ſo that the diſpute

diſpute now lies between the *Perſon of Chriſt*, and his *Goſpel*; which muſt be the foundation of our hope, which is the way to life and happineſs.

To make this appear, I ſhall conſider that account, which Dr. *Owen* gives us, of the *Perſonal graces and excellencies of Chriſt*, which in general conſiſt in three things. *Firſt, His fitneſs to ſave from the grace of Union, and the proper and neceſſary effects thereof: Secondly, His fulneſs to ſave from the Grace of Communion, or the free conſequences of the Grace of Union: and Thirdly, His excellency to endear from his compleat ſutableneſs to all the wants of the Souls of men.* Communion with Jeſus Chriſt, pag. 53.

Firſt, *That he is fit to be a Saviour from the Grace of Union*, and if you would underſtand what this ſtrange *Grace of Union* is, *it is the uniting the nature of God and Man in one Perſon, which makes him fit to be a Saviour to the uttermoſt: He lays his hands upon God by partaking of his nature.* Zachar. 13. 7. *and he lays his hands on us by partaking of our nature*; Hebr. 2. 14. 16. *and ſo becomes a days-man or Umpire between both:* now though this be a great truth, that the Union of the Divine

Divine and Humane Nature in Christ did excellently qualifie him for the Office of a Mediator, yet this is the unhappiest man in expressing and proving it, that I have met with: for what an untoward representation is this of Christs Mediation, that he came to make peace *by laying his hands on God and men*, as if he came to part a *Fray* or *Scuffle*: and he might as well have named *Gen.* 1. 1. or *Matth.* 1. 1. or any other place of Scripture for the proof it, as those he mentions: but to let that pass, in his *Chap.* 3. he discourses this more at large, and thither I shall follow him. Where he tells us, *how glorious Christ is in his Deity, and how desirable in his Humanity, and what are the glorious effects of the Union of the Divine and Humane Nature.*

As for the *first, how excellent and desirable Christ is in his Deity.* From the Deity of Christ he observes, *the endless, bottomless, boundless grace and compassion that is in him. It is not the grace of a Creature, no not of the humane Nature it self, that can serve our turn; if it could be conceived as separate from the Deity, surely so many thirsty guilty Souls, as every day drink deep and large,*

draughts

draughts of grace and mercy from him, would (if I may ſo ſpeak) ſink him to the very bottom, nay it could afford no ſupply at all, but only in a moral way (and that is a very pitiful way indeed) *But when the Conduit of his Humanity is inſeparably united to the infinite inexhauſtible Fountain of the Deity, who can look into the depths thereof: If now there be grace enough for ſinners in an alſufficient God, it is in Chriſt*—— On this ground it is, *That if all the World ſhould (if I may ſo ſay) ſet themſelves to drink free grace, and mercy, and pardon, drawing waters continually from the Wells of Salvation; if they ſhould ſet themſelves to draw from one ſingle promiſe, an Angel ſtanding by, and crying, Drink, O my Friends, yea drink abundantly, take as much grace and pardon, as ſhall be abundantly ſufficient for the World of ſin, which is in every one of you, they would not be able to ſink the grace of the promiſe* (of the Perſon of Chriſt you mean) *one hairs breadth*— *The infiniteneſs of Grace with reſpect to its Spring or Fountain* (the Deity of Chriſt) *will anſwer all objections*—— *What is our finite guilt before it* (a World of ſin is ſomething, though it bear

bear no proportion indeed to infinite Grace) *shew me the Sinner that can spread his iniquity to the dimensions* (*if I may so say*) (no man ever had more need, nor made better use of *so says*) *of this grace: here is mercy enough for the greatest, the oldest, the stubbornest transgressor, &c.* enough in all reason this, what a comfort is it to sinners to have such a God for their Saviour, whose Grace is *boundless* and *bottomless*, and *exceeds the largest dimensions of their sins*, though there be a World of sin in them? But what now if the *Divine Nature* it self have not such an *endless, boundless, bottomless grace and compassion*, as the *Dr. now* talks of? For at other times, when it serves his turn better, we can hear nothing from him but the *naturalness of Gods vindictive Justice*. Though God be rich in mercy, he never told us yet, that his mercy was so boundless and bottomless: he hath given a great many demonstrations of the severity of his anger against sinners, who could not be much worse, than the *greatest, the oldest, and stubbornest transgressors*. But supposing the Divine Nature were such a *bottomless Fountain of Grace*, how comes this

this to be a *Personal Grace* of the Mediator; For a *Mediator*, as *Mediator*, ought not to be considered as the *Fountain*, but as the *Minister of Grace: God the Father* certainly ought to come in *for a share at least* in being the *Fountain of Grace*, though the Dr. is pleased to take no notice of him. But how excellent is the Grace of Christs Person above the Grace of the Gospel? For that is a bounded and limited thing, *it is a strait gate, and narrow way that leadeth unto life, there is no such boundless mercy, as all the sins in the World cannot equal its dimensions, as will save the greatest, the oldest, and the stubbornest transgressors.*

Thus *the Love of Christ is an eternal Love, because his Divine Nature is eternal; and it is an unchangeable Love, because his Divine Nature is unchangeable; and his love is fruitful, for it being the love of God, it must be effectual and fruitful in producing all the things which he willeth unto his Beloved: he loves Life, Grace, Holiness into us, he loves us into Covenant, loves us into Heaven.* This is an excellent Love indeed, which doth all for us, and leaves nothing for us to do: we owe this dis-

covery ſee you to an *Acquaintance with Chriſts Perſon* (or rather with his *Divine Nature*) for the *Goſpel* is very ſilent in this matter. All that the Goſpel tells us, is, that Chriſt loved ſinners ſo as to dye for them, and that he loves good men, who believe and obey his Goſpel ſo as to ſave them, and that he continues to love them, while they continue to be good; but hates them, when they return to their old vices: and therefore I ſee, there is great reaſon for ſinners to fetch their comforts, not from the *Goſpel*, but from the *Perſon of Chriſt*, which as far excels the *Goſpel*, as the *Goſpel* excels the *Law*.

But methinks this is a very odd way of arguing from the Divine Nature; for if the love of Chriſt as God, be ſo infinite, eternal, unchangeable, fruitful, I would willingly underſtand, how ſin, and death, and miſery came into the World: For if this Love be ſo eternal and unchangeable, &c. becauſe the Divine Nature is ſo, then it was always ſo: for God always was what he is, and that which is eternal, could never be other than it is now; and why could not this eternal, and unchangeable,

changeable, and fruitful love as well preſerve us from falling into ſin, and miſery, and death, *as Love, Life, and Holineſs into us*; for it is a little odd, firſt *to love us into ſin and death*, that then he may *love us into Life and Holineſs*; which indeed could not be, if this Love of God were always ſo unchangeable and fruitful, as this Author perſwades us, it is now: for if this Love had always *loved Life and Holineſs into us*, I cannot conceive, how it ſhould happen, that we ſhould ſin and dye.

Not that I deny, that the Love of God is eternal, unchangeable, fruitful, that is, that God was always good, and always continues good, and manifeſteth his love and goodneſs in ſuch ways as are ſuitable to his Nature, which is the fruitfulneſs of it: but then the unchangeableneſs of Gods love doth not conſiſt in being always determined to the ſame object, but in that he always loves for the ſame reaſon, that is, that he always loves true vertue and goodneſs, where-ever he ſees it, and never ceaſes to love any perſon, till he ceaſes to be good, and then the immutability of his Love is the reaſon, why he loves,

no longer; for ſhould he love a wicked man, the reaſon and nature of his Love would change: And the fruitfulneſs of God's Love with reſpect to the Methods of his Grace and Providence doth not conſiſt in producing what he loves by an omnipotent and irreſiſtible power (for then ſin and death could never have entred into the World) but he governs, and doth good to his Creatures in ſuch ways, as are moſt ſuitable to their natures. He governs reaſonable Creatures by Principles of Reaſon, as he doth the material World by the neceſſary Laws of Matter, and bruit Creatures by the Inſtincts and Propenſities of Nature.

From hence he proceeds to ſhew, *how deſirable Chriſt is in his Humanity, by reaſon of his freedom from all ſin, both Original and Actual, and his fulneſs of Grace; that all Grace was in him for the kinds thereof, and all degrees of Grace, for its perfection.* This indeed doth repreſent him as a very excellent Perſon, a ſpotleſs Sacrifice, and a great Example to the World, but theſe *perſonal perfections* cannot paſs out of his *Perſon* to become *ours.*

But

But then Thirdly, you muſt conſider, *That all theſe perfections of the Divine and Humane Nature are united in one Perſon, and this made him fit to ſuffer, and able to bear whatever was due unto us, which no Creature could do; for if the weight of our ſins had been laid upon a meer innocent Creature, how would they have overwhelmed him, and buried him for ever out of the preſence of God?* No doubt the Sacrifice of Chriſt, who was God-Man, was of greater value, than the Sacrifice of any meer Creature could be, but I know not what this is to his purpoſe, and do as little admire his *Philoſophy.*

But his being God and Man, made him an endleſs, bottomleſs Fountain of Grace to all that believe: This he was as God, as we were told before, and his Grace was never the more *bottomleſs* for becoming Man. The deſign, you ſee, of all this is to make the *Perſon of Chriſt* the *Fountain of all Grace*, from whence we muſt *drink pardon and mercy* as long as we need any, and ſuch mercy too, as his Goſpel is unacquainted with; he hath a *fulneſs of all Grace* in himſelf, and from thence we

muſt receive the communications of it.

And this brings me to the ſecond ſort of the *Perſonal Graces and Excellencies of Chriſt, his fulneſs to ſave from the Grace of Communion, or the free conſequences of the Grace of Union.* As for this *Grace of Communion* (as he is pleaſed to call it, though it ſounds a little harſh to be a *Perſonal Grace*, and yet communicated) *whereby Chriſt communicates his fulneſs to Believers*, I ſhall reſerve it for its proper place, and ſhall at preſent only conſider, what this *Perſonal fulneſs in Chriſt is*, which he calls, *all the furniture he received from the Father, by the Unction of the Spirit, for the work of our Salvation:* and near of kin to this is his third *Perſonal Grace, his Excellency to endear from his compleat ſuitableneſs to all the wants of the ſouls of men. There is no man whatever* (this ſounds like univerſal Redemption) *that hath any want in reference to the things of God, but Chriſt will be unto him, that which he wanteth; is he dead? Chriſt is life; is he weak? Chriſt is the power of God, and the wiſdom of God; hath he the ſenſe of guilt upon him? Chriſt is compleat*

Communion p. 54.

pleat Righteouſneſs, the Lord our Righteouſneſs: many poor Creatures are ſenſible of their wants, but know not where their remedy lies. Indeed whether it be life, or light, power, or joy, all is wrapt up in him. Now it muſt be acknowledged, that the Scripture doth attribute a *Fulneſs* to Chriſt, and he is called *Life* and *Righteouſneſs*, the *Power and Wiſdom of God:* So that there is no diſpute between us, whether Chriſt have *all fulneſs in him*, whether he be *our Life and Righteouſneſs*, the *Wiſdom and Power of God*; but the diſpute is, in what ſenſe the Scripture attributes all this to Chriſt. They ſay, that theſe are the *Perſonal Graces* of Chriſt, as Mediator, which are *inherent in him*; and muſt be derived from his *Perſon*; we ſay, they ſignifie the *Perfection and Excellency of his Religion, as being the moſt compleat and perfect declaration of the will of God, and the moſt powerful Method of the Divine Wiſdom for the reforming the World; as it preſcribes the only Righteouſneſs, which is acceptable to God, and directs us in the only way to Life and Immortality.*

Now to bring this controverſie to an iſſue, there cannot be a more effectual

way, than to examine thoſe places of Scripture, which ſpeak of this matter, and to learn their ſenſe of it: for if men be allowed to take Scripture phraſes, and put what ſenſe they pleaſe on them, we may quickly have as many different Religions, as there are different fancies among men.

To begin then with the *fulneſs of Chriſt*; and the firſt place, in which we meet with it, is in *John* 1. 16. *And of his fulneſs we all received, and Grace for Grace.* Now what is meant by this *fulneſs*, we may learn from *Verſe* 14. *The word was made fleſh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of Grace and Truth.* So that this *fulneſs*, which was in Chriſt, is *a fullneſs of Grace and truth*; and if we conſult *Ver.* 17. we ſhall find that this *Grace and Truth* is oppoſed to the *law of Moſes: The Law was given by* Moſes, *but Grace and Truth came by Jeſus Chriſt.* So that *Grace and Truth* ſignifie the *Goſpel*, which is a Covenant of Grace, and is expreſly called the *Grace of God*, *Titus* 2. 11. and contains the moſt clear and perſpicuous revelation of the Divine will in oppoſition to the Types and Shadows

dows of the Law; is *Truth* in oppoſition to *Types and Figures:* This is the *fullneſs* we receive from Chriſt, a perfect revelation of the Divine Will concerning the Salvation of Mankind, which contains ſo many excellent promiſes, that it may well be called *Grace*; and preſcribes ſuch a plain and ſimple Religion, ſo agreeable to the natural notions of good and evil, that it may well be called *Truth.*

This *fulneſs* dwelt *only* in Chriſt, and from him alone we receive it; for none of the Prophets, who were before him, did ſo perfectly underſtand the will of God, as he did: *No man hath ſeen God at any time, but the only begotten Son, who is in the boſom of the Father, he hath declared him. v.* 18. That is no man ever before had ſo perfect a knowledge of the will of God, (which is here called ſeeing God, becauſe ſight gives us the cleareſt evidence, and the moſt perfect and particular knowledg) but the Son of God, who perfectly underſtood all his moſt ſecret Counſels, hath perfectly declared the will of his Father to us. And hence that *fulneſs*, which we receive from Chriſt, is explained by *Grace for Grace:*

Grace: And of his fulneſs we have received, καὶ *viz. Grace for Grace:* χάριν ἀντὶ χάριτος, where the repetition of the word χάρις with a prepoſition, ſignifies only that *abundance of Grace* which is now manifeſted by the *Goſpel of Chriſt*. There is indeed ſome difference about the ſenſe of the prepoſition ἀντὶ; ſome of the ancient Fathers expound it by *Vice*, as St. *Auſtin*, *pro Legis gratiâ, quæ præteriit, gratiam Evangelii accepimus permanentem, & pro umbris & imaginibus veteris Inſtrumenti, gratia & veritas, per Chriſtum facta eſt, That inſtead of the Grace of the law, which is now paſt, we receive the Grace of the Goſpel, which is conſtant and permanent, and inſtead of the ſhadows and figures of the Old Teſtament, we have Grace and Truth, by Jeſus Chriſt*; and thus *Nonnas* in his Paraphraſe renders it, ἀντίθετον προτέρης χάριτος χάριν, --- though this ſeems to be a forc'd ſenſe; for the *Law* is no where called *Grace*, but *Grace* is expreſly oppoſed to the *Law* in the next *Verſe*, but however this you ſee, they agree in, that by the *fulneſs of Grace and truth*, they underſtand the *Goſpel*, that perfect Declaration, which Chriſt hath made of Gods will to the World. Now

Now though every man in his wits muſt confeſs, that this *fulneſs* was firſt in the *Perſon of Chriſt*, (as theſe men love to ſpeak) before he could communicate it to us, that is, that he firſt perfectly underſtood the will of God himſelf, before he could declare it to others, yet it is not this *Perſonal fulneſs* we are to attend to, but the *fulneſs and perfection of his Goſpel*, from whence we muſt fetch the knowledge of the Divine Will; for whatever *fulneſs* be in him, the Revelations of the Goſpel only communicate this *fulneſs* to us.

To the ſame purpoſe the Apoſtle diſcourſes in the 2. *Col.* 9. 10. *For in him dwelleth all the fulneſs of the Godhead bodily, and ye are compleat* πεπλη-ρωμένοι filled) *in him, who is the Head of all principalities and powers.* For the underſtanding of which we muſt conſider, what is meant by that Phraſe, *That in him dwelt all the fulneſs of the Godhead* (θεότητος of the Deity) *bodily*; which muſt be acknowledg'd to be an alluſive and Metaphorical expreſſion; for God, *who is a Spirit*, cannot in a proper ſenſe dwell *bodily* in any thing. And therefore we muſt obſerve, that the

the design of the Apostle in this Chapter is to perswade the *Colosians* to adhere to the Gospel of Christ; not to be seduced either by Jews, or *Gnosticks*, (who talkt very much in their canting phrase of the *pleromata*) to corrupt the Religion of Christ with Jewish Ceremonies, or Pagan Superstitions, *Ver.* 16, 17, 18, 19. and the principal argument he urges to this purpose, is the perfection of the Gospel Revelation, *that in Christ* (that is the Gospel of Christ) *are hid all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge*, *Ver.* 3. ὦ ᾧ εἰσι πάντες θεσαυροὶ τῆς σοφίας καὶ τῆς γνώσεως ἀποκρυφοί· That is, not in whom are hid (as our translation renders it contrary to the sense of the place) but in whom are all the hidden treasures (θησαυροὶ ἀποκρυφοί) of Wisdom and Knowledge: that is, who hath now revealed to us all those treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge, which in former Ages were hidden from the World, upon this he exhorts them to be firm and stedfast in the belief of the Gospel of Christ, and obedience to it, *Ver.* 6, 7. *To beware lest any man spoil them through Philosophy and vain deceit, after the traditions of men, after the Rudiments of the World,*

World, and not after Christ. That is, leſt their minds be corrupted through Philoſophical Speculations, or Traditionary ſuperſtitions, (in worſhiping Dæmons and Angels, *&c.*) which are inconſiſtent with the Goſpel of Chriſt, and owe their original only to the folly and ſuperſtition of Mankind. And then he adds, *for in him* (that is, in Chriſt) *dwelleth all the fulneſs of the Godhead bodily:* ſo that this muſt refer to that compleat and perfect Revelation of the Goſpel, which needs not be ſupplyed by the Philoſophy or Traditions of men. And to underſtand the Reaſon of this Phraſe, and the force of the Apoſtles argument, we muſt conſider, that this is an alluſion to *Gods dwelling in the Temple* at *Jeruſalem* by *Types* and *figures*, which were the *Symbols* of his *preſence*: for the Tabernacle or Temple was Gods Houſe wherein he dwelt, and the mercy ſeat, and Cherubims, *&c.* were the Emblems of Gods preſence there, and this Symbolical preſence of God in the Temple was very agreeable to that Symbolical and Ceremonial worſhip, which he then inſtituted and commanded: He dwelt among them by Types and figures, and

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fore instituted a Typical and figurative Religion; and this was an imperfect and obscure Declaration of himself to the World: But now God hath sent his Son to Tabernacle among us. *John* 1. 14. the *Deity it self* now dwells in the *Temple of Christs body*, not by Types and figures, as formerly he dwelt in the Temple at *Jerusalem*, but by a real and immediate presence, and Union; and therefore those Revelations, which are made by Christ, are answerable to the *Inhabitation of the Godhead in him*, contain a true and perfect Declaration of Gods will, in opposition to the imperfect Rudiments and obscure Types and figures of the Law. So that σωματικῶς, or *bodily*, is opposed to *figurative and Typical*: and this is a plain demonstration of the perfection of the Gospel Revelation, that the fulness of the Deity dwelt *substantially* in Christ, and we need not doubt, but that so excellent a Prophet as he was, in whom the Deity it self inhabited, hath perfectly revealed Gods will to us. All the figures of the Temple were accomplisht in *Christ's Person*, he was that in truth and reality, which the Temple was a figure of, *God dwelling*

dwelling among us, and his Religion anſwers the greatneſs of his Perſon: *The Godhead dwelt in him bodily*, not by Types and figures, and his Religion is σῶμα too, all truth and ſubſtance, *The Law was but a ſhadow of things to come, but the Body is of Chriſt*, *Ver.* 17. his Religion is *Body, truth, and ſubſtance:* So that this place is exactly parallel, with *John* 1. 14. *The word was made fleſh and dwelt among us*, ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν Tabernacled among us: herein the figure of the Tabernacle was fulfilled, *that God dwelt in our fleſh:* and the Revelations he made of God's will did agree with the manner of his appearance; were *full of Grace and truth*, not a Typical and figurative, but a plain and perfect Declaration of Gods will. And as the Evangeliſt tells us, *That of his fulneſs we have all received*; that we are perfectly inſtructed by him in the will of God, ſo our Apoſtle adds here, *and ye are compleat in him*, πεπληρωμένοι, filled in him; you need no other Inſtructor but Chriſt, who hath revealed as much of Gods will, as is neceſſary for us to know. So that *this fulneſs of the Godhead dwelling bodily in Chriſt*, does ultimately reſolve

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it self into the perfection of the Gospel-Revelation; for since the *fulness of the Deity* did inhabit in *Christs Person*, we need not question, but he was able to acquaint us with the whole mind and will of God, and that he would do so. The force of which Reason our Saviour himself takes notice of *John* 3. 34, 35. *For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God*, that is, declareth his whole will to us, *for God giveth not the Spirit by measure to him:* It is not with him, as it was with meaner Prophets, who had only some particular Revelations of the Divine will; *but the fulness of the Godhead dwells in him bodily. The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hands.*

Thus the *fulness of Christ*, you see, signifies the excellency and perfection of the Gospel; and in other places this fulness signifies the Church of Christ. *Eph.* 1. 22, 23. *And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fulness of him, that filleth all in all:* Where the *Church* is called the *fulness of Christ*, which makes him (as it were) compleat and perfect;

fect; for he cannot be a *perfect Head* without a *Body*; hence the *Church* is called *Christ*. 1 *Cor.* 12. 12. *For as the body is one and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many are one body, so also is Christ:* that is the *Christian Church*, as it immediately follows; *for by one spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews, or Gentiles, whether we be bond, or free*; and *Beza* tells us, that this is the the reason of that phrase, which so frequently occurs in the New Testament, of *being in Christ*, that is being members of the *Christian Church*.

Now the *Church* is called the *Fulness of Christ* with respect to its extent and universality, that it is not confined to any particular Nation, as the Jewish Church was, but takes in *Jews and Gentiles, Bond and Free:* for this I take to be the meaning of *Col.* 1. 19. *For it pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell*, which words are commonly expounded to the same sense with *Col.* 2. 9. *For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily*; but if we consult the Context, we shall see reason for a different sense, and *Beza* observes, that some Expositors by *his fulness* in this place

underſtand the *Church*: for *Verſ.* 18. the Apoſtle tells us, that *He is the head of the body, the Church, who is the beginning, the firſt-born from the dead, that in all things he might have the preheminence: for it pleaſed the Father, that in him ſhould all fulneſs dwell*: where *fulneſs* muſt be expounded of the *Church*, that it pleaſed God to unite his Church into Chriſt; for the Apoſtle aſſigns this as the reaſon of Chriſts being the *Head of the Church*. And if you would know, why the Church is called *Fulneſs*, and *all fulneſs ſaid to dwell in Chriſt*: the reaſon follows in 20, 21. *And having made peace through the blood of his Croſs to reconcile all things by him, I ſay, whether they be things in Earth, or things in Heaven. And you, who were ſometime alienated, and enemies in your minds by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled.* This is that *fulneſs that dwells in Chriſt*, that he is made the Head of the Univerſal Church both in Heaven and Earth, that Jews and Gentiles are now united in *one Body*; that whereas in former Ages, the *Church of God* ſeemed to be confined to the *Jewiſh Nation*, now it pleaſed the Father, that Chriſt ſhould be

be the *Universal shepherd and Bishop of Souls*, by him to reconcile all things to himself: and this too is the meaning of that Phrase, *The fulness of him, who filleth all in all*: therefore the Church is called his *Fulness*, because *he filleth all in all*: that is, doth not confine his care and providence, and the influences of his Grace to *any one* Nation or People, but extends it to the *whole World*.

Thus the *fulness of Christ* signifies in *Eph.* 4. 13. *Till we all come in the Unity of the Faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:* εἰς μέτρον ἡλικίας τῆς πληρώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ, which is the explication of εἰς ἄνδρα τέλειον, *to a perfect man*. That is, to that perfection of faith and knowledge, which becomes the *Christian Church*. For ἡλικία signifying the age, and growth, and stature of a man, the fulness of Christ cannot so properly be understood of any thing as of the Christian Church.

This is all that I can find in Scripture concerning the *fulness of Christ*, which either signifies the perfection of his Gospel, or the Universality of his

Church: which is a plain demonstration of those mens skill in expounding Scripture, who make this fulness a *Personal Grace* in Christ, and apply it to every thing they can find, or fancy, in him: *All the furniture that he received from the Father by the Unction of the Spirit, for the work of our Salvation: The fulness of his Divine and Humane Nature, the fulness of Love in Christ, the fulness of habitual Grace, fulness of Satisfaction, fulness of Merit, fulness of Power and Vertue, a fulness of Justification, and a fulness of Sanctification:* which fulness, I am sure, hath confounded mens notions of Religion, and made them look upon Christ only as a *Fountain*, from whence they must *drink* grace, and mercy, and pardon, justification, and eternal life.

Let us now consider in what sense Christ is called *our life*: and he is so called with respect to his Doctrine, his Sacrifice, and that Power he is invested with to raise us from the dead. He is called *Life* with respect to his *Doctrine*, because he preached the *Word of Life*, and *hath brought Life and Immortality to light by the Gospel*: hence in *Joh.* 1. 4. the Evangelist tells us,

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In him was life, and the life was the light of men: That is, he preached the Word of Life; which enlightned the dark minds of men: for it is not imaginable how *Life* ſhould be light in any other ſenſe, than as this Word of Life, which Chriſt preached, enlightned their minds, and diſpelled all the Miſts of Errour and Ignorance: hence Chriſt tells his Diſciples, *I am the way, the truth, and the life, no man cometh to the Father but by me*, *Joh.* 14. 6. that is, I declare the true and only way to life and happineſs, and no man can throughly underſtand the will of God, nor conſequently be a true Worſhipper of him, without learning of me: thus he calls himſelf the *Bread of life*: *Joh.* 6. with reſpect to the Doctrine he preached, *Verſ.* 33. and with reſpect to that Sacrifice he offered for the life of the World, *Verſ.* 51. *I am the living Bread, which came down from Heaven, if any man eat of this bread, he ſhall live for ever, and the bread that I will give, is my fleſh, which I will give for the life of the World.*

Thus Chriſt is called *our Life*, becauſe he hath power and authority to beſtow *immortal life* upon all his ſincere

Followers, *Joh.* 11. 26, 27. *I am the Resurrection and the Life, he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and he that liveth and believeth in me shall never dye*: That is, he hath power to raise the dead, and will actually raise all those who believe in him, and reward them with eternal life. To the same purpose our Saviour speaks in *Joh.* 5. 25, 26. *The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live; for as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself:* That is, he first raises those who are dead in sin, to a new spiritual life by the power of his Doctrine, & then hath Authority to raise them to an immortal life. This is the meaning too of that expression in *Col.* 3. 3, 4. *You are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God, when Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory*: That is, you profess your selves to be dead to this World in conformity to the death of Christ; and though that immortal life, which you expect to enjoy with Christ, who is now risen again from the dead, be

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at present concealed from your view, yet when Christ, who is the Author of eternal life, and hath power to raise us from the dead, shall appear the second time to judge the World, then shall ye appear with him in glory.

So that when Christ is called *our Life*, the meaning is, that he hath published the Word of Life to us, which contains the most express promises of a blessed Immortality, and the most plain and easie directions how to attain it: and that by his death he hath expiated our sins, and confirmed all these promises to us; and being risen from the dead himself, hath now power to raise us. We must not dream of fetching life from the *Person* of Christ, as we draw water out of a Fountain; but if we would live for ever with Christ, we must stedfastly believe and obey his Gospel, which is a Principle of a Divine life in us, and then we may joyfully expect, that when our Lord and Saviour comes again to judge the World, he will raise us from the dead, and reward our Faith, and Patience, and Obedience with *Immortal Life*.

Thus to proceed, *Christ is the Power*

of God, and the Wisdom of God, which these men call *Personal Graces too*. But I have already shewed you at large, that Christ is the Wisdom of God, with respect to those Revelations he made of Gods will. The Gospel of Christ is the Wisdom and Power of God: 1 *Cor.* 1. 24. *Christ the Power of God and the Wisdom of God*: that is, the Doctrine of a crucified Christ, as will appear from the verses before: *The Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness; but to them who are called both Jews and Greeks: Christ the Power of God, and the Wisdom of God.* The Jews were all for Signs and Miracles, the Greeks were for curious Philosophical Speculations, which might gratifie their inquisitive minds, and therefore neither of them could relish that plain simple Doctrine of a crucified Christ, but whatever these men thought of it, the Apostle tells us, that this Doctrine of a crucified Saviour is *the Power of God and Wisdom of God.* That is the most powerful Method which was ever used by God for the reforming the World, and the contri-

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vance and effect of excellent Wisdom; and thus the Gospel of Christ is called the *Power of God to Salvation to them that believe:* Rom. 1. 16. and *by this foolishness of Preaching*, that is, by preaching this foolish Doctrine (as it was accounted by the Wise-men of the World) of a crucified Christ, *it pleased God to save them that believe.* Christ indeed being now exalted to the right hand of the Majesty on High, may in a proper sense be called the Power of God, because all power is given to him both in Heaven and Earth, and he hath the supreme government of all the affairs of this spiritual Kingdom; and this is a *Personal* Power inherent in him, which all good men shall find the blessed effects of: but then the exercise of this Power is confined to the Rules of the Gospel, he hath power to save those who believe and obey him, and he hath power to destroy his enemies, to accomplish all the promises, and to execute all the threatnings of his Gospel: So that this Personal Power in Christ can give us no greater encouragement than the Gospel doth; It cannot save any man whom the Gospel condemns, we have

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no reason to trust to his Personal Power, unless we first obey his Gospel: for how omnipotent soever he be, his Gospel is the measure of his Actings, if that condemns us, his omnipotent Power will not save us. But the chief *Personal Grace*, which these men most vehemently contend for, is still behind, *viz. the Righteousness of Christ*: Now no Christian will deny, that Christ was very righteous, a great Example of universal Holiness and Purity; and it must be confessed, that his Righteousness was not an *imaginary imputed Righteousness*, but *Inherent and Personal*; but what comfort is this to us, that Christ was Righteous, if we continue wilful and incorrigible Sinners? Yes, says the Doctor, *Hast thou the sense of guilt upon thee? Christ is compleat Righteousness, the Lord our Righteousness*: This makes Christ suitable to the wants of a Sinner indeed, that he hath a righteousness for him, which God infinitely prefers before *any home-spun Righteousness of his own*. This is a very comfortable notion for bad men, and such as I would not part with for all the World, did I resolve to live wickedly, and yet intend to get

Communion with Jesus Christ. p. 55.

get to Heaven: But it is good to be ſure in a matter of ſuch importance, and therefore let us conſider, in what ſenſe Chriſt is called *our Righteouſneſs*, and what the Scripture intends by theſe Phraſes of *the Righteouſneſs of God*, or the *Righteouſneſs of Faith*, or *the Righteouſneſs of God by Faith*.

To begin then with that famous place in the Old Teſtament, *Jerem.* 23. 6. where Chriſt is expreſly called the *Lord our Righteouſneſs*: *In his days* Judah *ſhall be ſaved, and* Iſrael *ſhall dwell ſafely, and this is his name, whereby he ſhall be called, The Lord our Righteouſneſs*: a very expreſs place to prove, that *Chriſt is our Righteouſneſs*: that is, as theſe men expound it, *that the only righteouſneſs, wherewith we muſt appear before God, is the righteouſneſs of Chriſt imputed to us*: but is there no other poſſible ſenſe to be made of this Phraſe? *Righteouſneſs* in Scripture is a word of a very large uſe, and ſometimes ſignifies no more, than *Mercy*, *kindneſs*, and *beneficence*, and ſo the *Lord our righteouſneſs* is the Lord, who does good to us, who is our Saviour and deliverer: which is very agreeable to the Reaſon of this name, *that in*

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his days Judah *shall be saved, and* Israel *shall dwell safely*: And *righteousness* signifies that part of Justice, which consists in relieving the injured and oppreſt: thus *David* speaks in *Psalm* 4. 1. *Hear me, when I call, O God of my righteousness*: i. e. *Thou O God, who maintainest my right and my cause. Psalm* 9. 4. Thus in *Isaiah* 54. 17. *No weapon, that is formed against Thee, shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise up against thee in judgment, thou shalt condemn; this is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord.* Which is a parallel expreſſion to the *Lord our righteousness*, and signifies no more than that God will avenge their cauſe, and deliver them from all their Enemies. The like we have in *Isaiah* 45. 24. *Surely shall one say, in the Lord have I Righteousness and strength; even to him shall men come, and all that are incensed against him, shall be ashamed; in the Lord shall all the seed of* Israel *be justified, and shall glory*: that is, the Lord is that juſt and righteous judg; who will juſtifie good men, *i. e.* deliver them from the violence and injuries of their Enemies: He is *their righteousness*

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and strength, their righteous, strong, and powerful deliverer: which agrees with that promise in *Verse* 14. *In Righteousness thou shalt be established, thou shalt be far from oppression, thou shalt not fear, and from terrour, for it shall not come near thee.* And to name but one place more: *Isaiah* 61. 10, 11. *I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my Soul shall be joyful in my God, for he hath cloathed me with the garments of Salvation, he hath cover'd me with the Robe of Righteousness, as a Bridegroom decketh himself with Ornaments, and as a Bride adorneth her self with Jewels: for as the Earth bringeth forth her bud, as the Garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord will cause Righteousness and Praise to spring forth before all Nations.* This sounds very like an *Imputed Righteousness*; for what can be meant by the *Robe of Righteousness*, but that pure and spotless Robe of Christs Righteousness, which covers all our sins and deformities, and makes us appear as beautiful and lovely in the eyes of God, as a Bride does, who adorns her self with Jewels? This is the effect of our espousal with Christ, that we are cover'd, and adorn'd with

with his Righteousness: but if we will attend to the circumstances of the place, and not to the bare sound of words, we need seek no farther for the confutation of this fancy: for the *Garment of Salvation*, and the *Robe of Righteousness*, signifie those great deliverances God promised to *Israel* in the former *Verses*, which should make them as glorious in the eyes of men, as a splendid garment would: *that Righteousness and praise, which God would cause to spring forth before all Nations: even as the Earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the Garden causeth those things which are sown in it to spring forth*: That is, that God would work such great deliverances for them by such improbable means, and in such plenty and abundance, as if they sprang out of the Earth, which should make it appear to all Nations, *That they are the Seed whom the Lord hath blessed*: Vers. 9. And what hath this to do with the *Imputation of Christs Personal Righteousness to us?*

But it is time now to proceed to the *New Testament*; for indeed we cannot reasonably expect, that so great a *Gospel Mystery*, as this of the *Imputation of Christs*

Christs Righteousness is, should be so clearly discovered in the *Old Testament*, where the *Gospel* was wrapt up in *Types and Figures*. Now it is very observable, that in all the Histories of the Gospel, which give us an account of our Saviours Sermons and Parables, whereby he instructed the people in all necessary Truths, he makes no mention at all of the *Imputation of his Righteousness* to them, but exacts from them a Righteousness of *their own*, if they would find mercy with God: now it is very strange (if the *Imputation of Christs Righteousness for our Justification* be the great Gospel Mystery, and the only way to find favour with God) that our Saviour in all his Sermons should not once mention this; that he should not once warn his Hearers (as the *Gospel Preachers* of our days do) to beware of trusting to their *own Righteousness*, or of expecting Salvation by their *own Works*; but that instead of this, he should so severely enjoyn them the practice of an *Universal Righteousness* as the only thing that pleases God; and so severely threaten those who continue in any sin, *who break the least of his Commandments*,

ments, that they shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but shall be banished from the presence of God into outer darkness. This, I confess, to me (who am apt in the first place to admire *our Saviours Sermons, who was the first Author of our Religion*, before the Writings of the Apostles themselves, though inspired men) is a very great prejudice against such notions, as are set up for the *Fundamentals of Christianity*, without the belief of which we cannot be saved, when there is not the least footsteps of them to be seen in the Gospel of our Saviour: for did not our Saviour instruct his Hearers in all things necessary to Salvation? Or have the Evangelists given us an imperfect account of our Saviours Doctrine, and omitted so essential a part of it, as the *Imputation of his Righteousness?* Chuse which side you please, and the consequence is very bad: if the first, then Christ was not faithful in the discharge of his Prophetical Office, did not instruct his Hearers in all things necessary to Salvation; if the latter, you overthrow the *Credit* of the Gospel, and by both destroy the Foundation of our Faith.

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There were some things indeed, which the *Apostles themselves*, by reason of their Jewish prejudices, could not understand, while Christ was with them; and therefore he reserved the more perfect Revelation of those Truths till the *descent of the Holy Ghost*: as he tells his Disciples in *Joh.* 16. 12, 13. Such was that Doctrine of the Nature of his *spiritual Kingdom*, which should commence with sufferings and death, whereas they expected a *Temporal Messias*, as the rest of the Jews did; and the receiving the *Gentiles into his Church*, which *S. Peter himself* did not understand, till he was instructed by a Vision, in *Act.* 10. which is so frequently in the Epistles called that *Mystery which was hid from Ages*: but now the knowledge of these things was not absolutely necessary to eternal life, and therefore the perfect revelation of them might be deferr'd till the most convenient season: It was necessary indeed, that the Apostles should understand the full extent of their Commission to preach the Gospel to all Nations, Gentiles as well as Jews; but it was not necessary to know this, till they were sent to preach: but we

cannot imagine, that our Saviour would neglect to acquaint them with the neceſſary terms and conditions of Salvation: for *his Sermons* were to be the Rule of *theirs*; and had the Apoſtles taught any thing as neceſſary to Salvation, which our Saviour had not taught, eſpecially any thing that did ſo plainly contradict the Doctrine of our Saviour, as this *imputed Righteouſneſs* doth, it would very much have weakned their credit with me; for this had been to preach another *Goſpel* than our Saviour did, and we have S. *Paul's* command to reject ſuch Preachers, though they were *Apoſtles*, or *an Angel from Heaven*, *Gal* 1. 8, 9. I do not ſpeak this to evacuate the Authority of the Apoſtles, or of their Writings; for they do not make any thing neceſſary to Salvation, but what Chriſt did, nor contradict any thing, which Chriſt hath taught: But to awaken thoſe men, who take little notice of the Goſpel of our Saviour, while they fetch all their *Myſterious Divinity* out of ſome obſcure paſſages of S. *Pauls* Epiſtles; Though S. *Peter* long ſince told us, *That there were many things in them hard to be underſtood, which they that*

that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scripture, to their own destruction, 2 Pet. 3. 16. and yet if they can meet with any obscure Phrases, which will serve their turn, without considering how their sense agrees with the Gospel of our Saviour, they make it the Foundation of their Faith, and a *standing Rule* to expound the Doctrine of our Saviour, and to measure the *Orthodoxy* of all Opinions: whereas on the contrary, this ought to be a sufficient reason to reject such Interpretations, that the Gospel of our Saviour is perfectly silent in a matter pretended to be of such absolute necessity to Salvation.

Having premised this, it is time now to consider those Texts of Scripture, whereon they found this notion of the *Imputation of Christs Righteousness*; And it is worth observing, that in all the *New Testament* there is no such expression as the *Righteousness of Christ*, or the *Imputation of Christs Righteousness*: we there only find the *Righteousness of God*, and the *Righteousness of Faith*, and *the Righteousness of God, which is by the Faith of Jesus Christ*; which is very strange, did the whole

Mystery of the Gospel consist in the *Imputation of Christs Righteousness*, that neither Christ nor his Apostles should once tell us so in expres words. But to consider particular places: I shall begin with that Phrase of the *Righteousness of God*, which sometimes signifies his *Justice, Veracity, or Goodness*, *Rom.* 3. 5. but most commonly in the *New Testament* it signifies *that Righteousness which God approves and commands, and which he will accept for the Justification of a sinner*; which is contained in the Terms of the Gospel: *Rom.* 1. 17. *For therein is the Righteousness of God revealed from Faith to Faith*: Thus it is called the *Righteousness of God*, Matth. 6. 33. *Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness*, which is the same with the Righteousness of his Kingdom: now the *Kingdom of God* signifies the *state of the Gospel*, and the *Righteousness of God*, or *of his Kingdom*, that Righteousness which the Gospel prescribes, which is contained in the Sermons and Parables of Christ, and consists in a sincere and universal obedience to the Commands of God.

That we may the better understand this,

this, we must observe farther, that *this Righteousness of God* (that which he commands and rewards) *is the Righteousness of Faith, or Righteousness by the Faith* of Christ: Now *Faith*, and *Faith in Christ* is often used objectively, for the Gospel of Christ, which is the object of our Faith, or contains those matters which are to be believed; and so the *Righteousness of Faith, or by the Faith of Christ is that Righteousness which the Gospel commands.* Thus in *Acts* 24. 24. *Felix sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the Faith of Christ:* that is, *concerning Righteousness, Temperance, and the judgment to come: Ver.* 25. which are the principal matters of the Gospel: thus *obedience to the Faith* is obedience to the *Gospel, Rom.* 1. 5. In this sense *Faith* and *Works* are opposed to each other in St. *Pauls* Epistles, as hath been abundantly proved by others: the great dispute in the Epistle to the *Romans* is, whether we must be justified by the *Law of Moses*, or by the *Faith of Christ*: that is, whether the observation of all the external Rites and Ceremonies of the Law, and an external conformity of our Actions, to the moral Precepts of it will justi-

fie a man before God; or that sincere and universal obedience, which the *Gospel of Christ* requires, which transforms our minds into the likeness of God, and makes us new Creatures: And that this Righteousness of Faith, and this alone, can recommend us to God, the Apostle proves from the example of *Abraham*, in the 4. Chapter; who was accounted Righteous for the sake of his sincere and stedfast belief of Gods promises: *Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for Righteousness*, *Ver.* 3. and this, while he was *uncircumcised*, which is a convincing argument against the Jews, that *Circumcision*, and the observance of the Law of *Moses* is not necessary to justification, because *Abraham*, who was the Father of the faithful, and is set forth for the Pattern of our justification, was justified without it.

But that we may understand, what this justification by Faith is, and how the Apostle argues from *Abrahams* being justified by Faith to prove, that we must now be justified by the Faith of Christ, it is necessary to enquire, what that Faith was, whereby *Abraham* was justified, and what agreement

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there is between the *Faith of Abraham*, and *Faith in Christ.*

For *Abrahams* Faith was not a *Faith in Christ*, but *Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for Righteousness:* Christ indeed was the *Material object* of *Abrahams* Faith, that is, he believed that promise, which God made of sending Christ into the World, upon which account our Saviour tells the Jews, *your Father* Abraham *rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it, and was glad: John* 8. 5, 6. But no man could believe in Christ, till he came, that is could not believe any thing upon his Authority; which is the true notion of believing in him, as you shall hear more presently.

There is not a plainer argument, how apt men are to pervert the Scriptures to reconcile them to their own prejudices and preconceived opinions, than to observe what work they make with *Abrahams Faith*, as if that Faith, which was imputed to him for Righteousness, were a *fiducial reliance* and *recumbency* on Christ for Salvation, upon which the Righteousness of Christ apprehended by Faith was imputed to him: for suppose this *imputation of*

Christs Righteousness were revealed in the most plain and express words in the *New Testament*, yet it is hard to conceive, how *Abraham* should learn this great Mystery from that general and obscure promise, *In thy seed shall all the Nations of the Earth be blessed*, which is all, that was ever revealed to *Abraham* concerning Christ: This is such a train of thoughts from *in thy seed shall all the Nations of the Earth be blessed*, to the *imputation of Christs Righteousness*, as Mr. *Hobs* himself could never have hit on: for is there no possible way for God to bless the World, but by the imputation of Christs Righteousness? or is there such a natural and necessary connexion between this blessing, and the imputation of Christs Righteousness, that we cannot understand the one without the other.

Pray let us consider, how many things *Abraham* must distinctly know (according to these mens own principles) before he could come to the knowledge of the imputation of Christs Righteousness; and he would be a wonderful man indeed, who could learn all this from that general promise, without some more particular revelation:

velation: As first, he must be well assured, that the *Blessings* here meant are *spiritual blessings*, *pardon of sin*, *and eternal life*, and that Christ should be a *spiritual* King and Saviour, and though this be the least difficulty of all, yet the promise is not so clear and express in this matter, but that men might mistake it, and so we know, the *whole Jewish Nation* for many Ages did, who had more particular promises concerning Christ, than this was, and yet expected only a *Temporal Prince*, who should sit on the *Throne of David*, and subdue their Enemies under their feet; and this was the great prejudice, which the *Jews* had against Christ and his Religion, that he so much deceived their expectationsby his *mean appearance*.

And secondly *Abraham* must know too, that Christ was to die for the sins of the World, without which (according to the Doctor) it is impossible God should forgive sin, considering the *naturalness of his vindictive Justice to him*; and this was more than the *Apostles* of Christ themselves understood till after his Resurrection, though Christ had expresly told them of it: And Thirdly, He must understand

ſtand alſo the perfect Holineſs and Innocency of Chriſts life, and that he fulfilled all righteouſneſs, not for *himſelf*, but for *us*: Nay Fourthly, He muſt underſtand that great Myſtery of the *Incarnation of the Son of God*; for without this it is impoſſible to underſtand the vertue and efficacy of his expiation, and Sacrifice, and Righteouſneſs, ſince the ſufferings of a meer man could never expiate ſin, nor his Righteouſneſs ſerve any more than himſelf: And Fifthly, He muſt underſtand alſo that *intimate oneneſs* and Conjunction, which is betwixt Chriſt and his Church, by vertue of which Union believers may challenge a right to all, that Chriſt did and ſuffer'd, which is ſuch a riddle, as theſe men explain it, as is not underſtood to this day: And Sixthly, He muſt underſtand too the nature of Faith, of *rowling* the Soul on Chriſt for Salvation, and renouncing all *Righteouſneſs of his own*, and then poſſibly he might without any more ado underſtand this great Myſtery of the *imputation of Chriſts Righteouſneſs*, and he that can believe, that *Abraham* could learn all this from that general promiſe, *In thy*

thy seed shall all the Nations of the Earth be blessed, may believe, what he will, and I suppose no man will trouble himself to confute him.

Now if you would know, what the *Faith of Abraham*, and of all good men in ancient times was, the Apostle to the *Hebrews* gives us a full account of it, in *Hebr.* 11. That he discourses there of a *justifying* Faith, that is, such a Faith *as renders men approved of God, & which he will count for Righteousness*, appears from the whole tenour of this Chapter. In the 2. *Verse* he tells us, *That by this the Elders obtained a good report, i. e.* the Fathers of the Old Testament were approved and rewarded by God for the sake of this Faith: as he shows particularly that *Abel obtained witness, that he was Righteous*, *v.* 4. that *Enoch* had the *testimony, that he pleased God*, *v.* 5. that *Noah* became *the Heir of Righteousness which is by Faith*, *v.* 7. *&c.* Now this *justifying* Faith is the *substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen*: ὑπόστασις a firm and confident expectation of those things, we hope for, and ἔλεγχος an argument of the being of those things, which we do

not

not see; that is, Faith is such a firm and stedfast perswasion of the truth of those things, which are not evident to sense, as makes us confidently hope for them: The object of Faith must be unseen things, as the Being, or providence of God, or a future state, something past or to come; the Creation of the World, or the final dissolution of it, or the accomplishment of any promises, and predictions; the nature of Faith consists in such a firm assent to these unseen things, as produces some answerable effects in our lives; This is the general notion of Faith, *by which the Elders obtained a good report*, and the different sorts of Faith result from the different objects and motives of it: the Apostle takes notice of two kinds of Faith in this Chapter, and *Faith in Christ* makes a third, which are all the kinds of Faith, the Scripture is acquainted with.

The first we may call a natural Faith, *i. e.* a belief of the Principles of natural Religion, which is founded upon natural demonstrations, or moral arguments; *as that God is, and that he is a Rewarder of them, that diligently seek him*, which was the Faith of *Abel* and

and *Enoch*, whereby they pleased God: for there being no mention made of the Faith of *Abel* and *Enoch*, in the old Testament, the Apostle proves, that they were true believers, because they had this Testimony, *that they pleased God*; now it is impossible to be sincerely Religious, or to do any acceptable service to God without the belief of his Being, and Providence, and care of good men: These are the first Principles of all Religion, and God required no more of those good men, who had no other particular Revelations of his will.

Secondly, There is a Faith in God, or a belief of those particular Revelations, which God made to the Fathers of the Old Testament: of this the Apostle gives us many examples in this Chapter: Thus *Noah* believed God, when he fore-warned him of the Universal deluge, and in obedience to him, provided an Ark for the safety of himself, and his Family, and this was imputed to him for Righteousness: *He became the Heir of the Righteousness, which is by Faith*: Thus *Abraham* in obedience to the Divine Revelation left his own Country and Father's House,

and

and went into a strange Land: thus *Sarah* by believing the promise of God, *received strength to conceive Seed, and was deliver'd of a Child, when she was past age; because she judged him faithful, who had promised.* Thus *Abraham* in obedience to God offered his Son *Isaac*, which was as Heroical an Act of Faith, as was ever done by Man: for besides that great and passionate kindness he had for his *only Son*, which made this a very difficult tryal; this command of offering his Son seem'd to thwart that former promise, *In Isaac shall thy Seed be called*; *i. e.* that from *Isaac* should proceed that numerous Offspring, which God had promised to *Abraham*; which was not very likely, when this very *Isaac* must be offer'd in Sacrifice, and die without leaving any Child to succeed him; but yet *Abraham* was so well assured both of the faithfulness and power of God, that whatever impossibilities humane reason suggested, he would neither disobey Gods command, nor distrust his promise, *but did believe in hope against hope*: the like examples we have of the Faith of *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, and *Joseph*, and *Moses*, *&c.* who firmly believed

all

all those particular Revelations God made to them, and confidently expected the performance of all his promises, how unlikely soever they appear'd to be: This is that Faith, whereby *Abraham*, and all the good men in those days were justified, *viz. Such a firm belief of the Being and Providence of God, and all those particular Revelations God made to them, as made them careful in all things to please God, and to obey him.*

From hence we learn thirdly, What *Faith in Christ* is, which is now imputed to us for Righteousness, as *Abrahams* Faith was to him; for to make our *Faith in Christ* answer to the Faith of *Abraham*, and all good men in former Ages, (without which the Apostles argument from *Abrahams* being justified by Faith to our justification by Faith is of no force) our *Faith in Christ* must signifie *such a stedfast belief of all those Revelations, which Christ hath made to the World, as governs our lives and Actions*: *Abraham* was justified by believing those Revelations, which God made to him, and we are justified by believing those Revelations, which Christ hath made of Gods will to

us;

us; for if by the *Righteousness of Faith*, you understand the *Righteousness of Christ apprehended by Faith and imputed to us*, you utterly destroy the Apostles argument for our justification by Faith: for *Abraham*, and all the good men of old were not justified by such a Faith as this; they never hear'd of the *Righteousness of Christ imputed to us*: Noah *was made Heir of Righteousness*, that is, was accounted a Righteous Person, because he believed that the *World should be drown'd*, and prepared an Ark at Gods command for himself and his Family: *Abrahams* Faith was *imputed to him for Righteousness*, because he left his own Country, and followed God into a strange land, and believed, that God would give him a Son, and make him the Father of many Nations, when he and his Wife were so old, that according to the course of nature, they could not expect any Child: and when *Sarah* by Faith had conceived, and brought forth this *Son of the Promise*, he offers this Son at Gods command without distrusting the performance of the Promise: Now what hath all this to do with an *Imputation of Christs Righteousness?*

ouſneſs? how does it follow, that becauſe *Abraham* was juſtified by ſuch noble and generous Acts of Faith, therefore we ſhall be juſtified by the imputation of Chriſts Righteouſneſs, by *rowling our Souls* on Chriſt for Salvation: Theſe two Faiths are of as different kinds, as can well be imagined, and therefore we cannot reaſon from one to the other, and St. *Paul* certainly underſtood himſelf better, than to argue at this weak rate.

And therefore to bring this diſcourſe to an Head, the difference between the Faith of *Abraham* and the Faith of Chriſtians is this, *that Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for Righteouſneſs*, and we believe in Chriſt, and this is counted unto us for Righteouſneſs; *Abraham* believed thoſe Revelations God made to him, either immediately by himſelf, or by the Miniſtry of Angels, we believe all thoſe Revelations God hath made to us by his *own Son: for God, who at ſundry times and in divers manners ſpake in time paſt to the Fathers by the Prophets, hath in theſe laſt days ſpoken unto us by his Son: Hebr.* 1. 1. So that the firſt notion of Faith in Chriſt is a firm belief of his Divine Authority,

which necessarily draws after it a belief of the whole Doctrine of the Gospel: thus in *John* 20. 31. *The Christian Faith is described by believing that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God:* and 1 *John* 5. 5. *Who is he that overcometh the World, but he that believeth, that Jesus is the Son of God:* That is, that he came from God with full power and Authority to declare his will, and confirm and ratifie the new Covenant. So that the difference between the *Faith of Abraham* and *Faith in Christ is*, that *Abrahams* Faith was founded on the immediate inspirations of God, or the Revelations of Angels, but a Faith in Christ is founded on the Authority of Christ, which is the first object of the Christian Faith; and the reason and foundation of all other Acts of Faith: *Abraham* had only some particular Revelations, as the object of his Faith, but now Christ hath made a perfect Revelation of the whole will of God, which is the object of our Faith; and thus the Christian Faith excells all other kinds of Faith, as much as the Revelations of the Gospel excel all other Revelations made to *Abraham* and other good men: but still the end of all Faith is the same to govern our lives,

lives, and make us obedient in all things to God, as *Abraham* was, without which no Faith can justifie.

And the same difference there is between the Righteousness of Faith in a general notion, as it is applyed to *Noah*, and *Abraham*, and those worthies of old, and *the Righteousness of God by the Faith of Jesus Christ: Rom.* 3.22. and that *Righteousness which is through the Faith of Christ, the Righteousness which is of God by Faith: Phil.* 3.9. The first signifies that Righteousness which is owing to an hearty belief of the Being and Providence of God, and those particular Revelations, which they received from God; the latter is the effect of a sincere belief and obedience to the Gospel, which is the most perfect Revelation, which God ever made of his will to mankind. This is so plain and easie an account of the rise and use of these phrases, and of the force of the Apostles reasoning from the *Faith of Abraham* to the *Faith of Christ* (which is unintelligible in any other way) that could men be reconciled to plain sense, it would need no other confirmation but the natural evidence of naked and simple truth. But not to be wanting to a good cause, let

us now examine thoſe Texts of Scripture, which are abuſed by theſe men to ſet up the *Perſonal Righteouſneſs of Chriſt as the only formal cauſe of our juſtification*, as that alone which can make us righteous before God.

I ſhall begin and end with that famous place. *Phil.* 3. 8, 9. (for the explication of this will give us occaſion to conſider all the material paſſages of Scripture, which are applyed to this purpoſe) *yea doubtleſs, and I account all things loſs for the excellency of the knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus my Lord, for whom I have ſuffer'd the loſs of all things, and I do account them but dung, that I may win Chriſt, and be found in him, not having my own righteouſneſs, which is of the Law, but that which is through the Faith of Chriſt, the Righteouſneſs, which is of God by Faith*: by *my own righteouſneſs* theſe men underſtand *inherent righteouſneſs*, whatever good St. *Paul* had done, either while he was a Jew, or after his Converſion to Chriſtianity: this he rejects, and therefore the *righteouſneſs, which is through the Faith of Chriſt*, muſt needs be an *imputed Righteouſneſs*, the *Perſonal Righteouſneſs of Chriſt apprehended by Faith*, and

and imputed to us. This is fairly offer'd, but what proof have they for it? That, I confeſs, I cannot learn, only it is taken for granted, that *my Righteouſneſs* ſignifies *inherent Righteouſneſs*, and the *Righteouſneſs of Faith imputed Righteouſneſs*, and it is a ſufficient anſwer to this to ſay, they need not ſignifie ſo. *My own Righteouſneſs* can ſignifie no more than that, in which he placed his Righteouſneſs, whatever it was; and what neceſſity is there to underſtand this of *Inherent Holineſs*; an *external* Righteouſneſs ſerves moſt mens turn very well, and this is the *righteouſneſs* by which the *Phariſees* (and amongſt the reſt St. *Paul*, while he was a *Phariſee*) expected to be juſtified; for what his Righteouſneſs was he tells us in *Ver.* 6, 7. *Circumciſed the eight day; of the ſtock of* Iſrael, *of the Tribe of* Benjamin, *an Hebrew of the Hebrews, as touching the Law a Phariſee* (who were mighty ſtrict and punctual in obſerving all external Ceremonies) and he expreſt his *zeal* for the law of *Moſes*, *by perſecuting the Chriſtian Church*, and *touching the Righteouſneſs, which is in the Law, he was blameleſs*: which laſt phraſe, *touching the Righte-*

ouſneſs of the law blameleſs, ſignifies only *an external blameleſineſs of Converſation*, as Mr. *Calvin* himſelf acknowledges: for this was the Phariſees notion even of the *moral law*, that the obligation of it did reach no farther than the outward man, and *Trypho the Jew in Juſtin Martyr* quarrels with the Goſpel of our Saviour for this very reaſon, that it requires the government of our thoughts and paſſions, which, he ſays, is impoſſible for a man to do: and thus we muſt underſtand this *blameleſineſs* here, unleſs we will ſay, that St. *Paul*, while he was a Phariſee, did perfectly obſerve the *moral law*, was blameleſs before God as well as before men, which I ſuppoſe thoſe who talk ſo much of the impoſſibility of keeping Gods laws, will be loath to owne. So that *my own Righteouſneſs, which is of the law* is ſo far from ſignifying an *inherent Righteouſneſs*, an inward and vital principle of holineſs, that it ſignifies only an *external Righteouſneſs*, which conſiſted in ſome *external Rites*, as *Circumciſion and Sacrifices, &c.* or *external priviledges*, as being *of the Seed of* Abraham, and *ſtock of* Iſrael, or an *external Civility and*

blame-

blameleſsneſs of Converſation, and this Righteouſneſs he had reaſon to reject, becauſe God will reject it.

This was all the Righteouſneſs he had, while he was a Phariſee, and *this he accounts dung and loſs for the excellency of the knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt our Lord*; *i. e.* for the ſake of the Goſpel (which is the knowledge of Chriſt, as you hear'd above) which contains a more excellent and perfect Righteouſneſs, than the Law did: and that *he might win Chriſt*, *i. e.* that he might attain to an Evangelical Righteouſneſs, ſuch as Chriſt was the Preacher, and example of: and *that he might be found in him, not having his own Righteouſneſs, which is of the law:* that at the laſt day he might appear to be a ſound and ſincere Chriſtian, whoſe righteouſneſs does not conſiſt only in ſome external obſervances, or an external Conformity to Gods Law, *but that, which is through the Faith of Chriſt, the Righteouſneſs, which is of God by Faith: i. e.* that inward and vital principle of holineſs, that new nature, which the Goſpel of Chriſt requires of us, and which this Chriſtian Faith will work in us; which is a Righteouſneſs of Gods own chu-

ſing, which he commands, and which he will reward.

To confirm all this we muſt obſerve a double *Antitheſis* in the words, the *Righteouſneſs of the law* is oppoſed to the *Righteouſneſs, which is by the Faith of Chriſt*, and *my own Righteouſneſs* oppoſed to the *Righteouſneſs of God*; now the ſureſt way to underſtand the meaning of this is to conſider, how theſe phraſes are uſed in Scripture.

The *Righteouſneſs of the law* (as you have already hear'd) is an *external Righteouſneſs*, which conſiſts in waſhings, and purifications, and Sacrifices, or an external Conformity to the moral Law: the *Righteouſneſs, which is by the Faith of Chriſt*, is an *Internal* Righteouſneſs, which conſiſts in the renovation of our minds and Spirits, in the government of our thoughts and paſſions, which is therefore called *being born again*, and becoming *new Creatures*, and *riſing again with Chriſt*, and *putting off the old man*, and being *renewed in the ſpirit of our minds, and putting on the new man, which after God is created in Righteouſneſs and true Holineſs*. The meaning of all which phraſes is that that Righteouſneſs which

which God requires of us under the Goſpel muſt be an inward principle of love and obedience, which changes our natures and transforms us into the image of God, as much as if we were born again, and made new Creatures.

Hence St. *Paul* tells us, that the reaſon why God ſent Chriſt into the World in our nature, to die as a Sacrifice for our ſins, and to confirm and ſeal the new Covenant with his blood was, *that the righteouſneſs of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the fleſh, but after the ſpirit, Rom.* 8. 3, 4. δικαίωμα *the righteouſneſs of the law*, that is τὸ τέλος, ὁ σκοπὸς, τὸ κατόρθωμα, as St. *Chryſoſtom* expounds it, that which the law was deſigned to work in them, but was found too weak to effect it by reaſon of the greater power and prevalency of ſin, *i. e.* the inward holineſs and purity of mind, which was repreſented and ſignified by thoſe external Ceremonies of Circumciſion, waſhing, purifications, and Sacrifices; this was the deſign of the Goſpel to work in us that internal holineſs and purity, which is the perfection and accompliſhment of

the

the *Typical and Figurative* Righteousnes of the Law.

I know very well, that this place is expounded of the *imputation* of Christs Righteousnes, that we fulfil the Righteousnes of the Law, not *personally*, but *imputatively*: but what reason can there be assigned for this, besides that they will expound Scripture so, which no man can help: for is there any mention here of the Righteousnes of Christ? that he fulfilled all Righteousnes for us, and that his Righteousnes is imputed to us, and so we fulfil the Righteousnes of the law in him? And we ought to consider, how consistent such an interpretation is with the Apostles design, which is to show the great vertue and efficacy of the Gospel in delivering us from the power of sin, which the law could not effect: *The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus* (that divine and spiritual law, which Christ hath given us, which governs our minds and spirits, and is the principal of a new spiritual life) *makes us free from the law of sin and death* (from the power and dominion of sin, which is called *a law*, and the *law in our members warring against the law of our minds.*

minds. Rom. 7. 21, 23.) for what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the fleſh, (what the law could not do, i. e. govern our minds and paſſions, *deliver us from the law of ſin and death,* from the Power and Dominion of our luſts) this God effected by ſending Chriſt into the World to publiſh the Goſpel to us, and to confirm all thoſe great promiſes and threatnings contained in it with his own blood, *That the righteouſneſs of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the fleſh, but after the Spirit:* how can *imputation* come in here? What pretty ſenſe would this make of the Apoſtles Argument? The Law was too weak to make men throughly good, to conquer their love to ſin, and to reform their hearts and lives; and therefore God ſent his Son into the World; What for? To give them better laws, and more excellent promiſes, and more powerful aſſiſtances to do good? No, by no means, but to fulfil all righteouſneſs for them, that they may fulfil the righteouſneſs of the law, not by doing any thing themſelves, but, by having all done for them, by having this perfect Righteouſneſs of Chriſt imputed to them: there was no

reaſon

reaſon ſurely to abrogate the *law of Moſes* for this end; it might have continued in full force ſtill, and have been as available to Salvation as the Goſpel is, *with the ſupplemental Righteouſneſs of Chriſt:* But the *weakneſs of the law*, which the Apoſtle complains of, was, not the want of an *imputed Righteouſneſs* (which might have been had as well under the Law, as under the Goſpel, if God had pleaſed) but, a want of ſtrength and power to ſubdue the ſinful appetites of men, *it was weak through the fleſh*, by reaſon of the greater prevalency of ſenſual luſts, which the law could not conquer; and therefore the Goſpel of our Saviour muſt ſupply this defect, not by an *imputed Righteouſneſs*, but, by an addition of greater power to enable men to do that which is good, to fulfil the external righteouſneſs of the law by a ſincere and ſpiritual obedience.

Much to the ſame purpoſe the Apoſtle diſcourſes in *Rom.* 7. *Ver.* 4, 5, 6. *Wherefore my Brethren, you alſo are become dead to the law by the body of Chriſt* (who put an end to that imperfect diſpenſation by his death) *that you ſhould be marryed to another, even to him*

him who is raiſed from the dead, that we ſhould bring forth fruit unto God: for when we were in the fleſh (under that carnal and fleſhly diſpenſation of the Law of *Moſes*) *the motions of ſin, which were by the Law* (which grew more boiſterous and unruly by the prohibitions of the law, *v.* 8.) *did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death, i. e.* did betray us to thoſe wicked actions, which end in Death; *but now we are delivered from the law, that being dead in which we were held, that we ſhould ſerve in newneſs of the ſpirit, and not in the oldneſs of the letter.* So that the reaſon why the Law of *Moſes* was abrogated, was becauſe it could not make men good; It nurſed them up in a ritual and external Religion, taught them to ſerve God in the *letter*, by Circumciſion and Sacrifices, or an external Conformity to the letter of the law: But the Goſpel of Chriſt alone teacheth us to worſhip God with the *ſpirit*, to offer a reaſonable Sacrifice to him, to fulfil the δικαίωμα νόμυ, *all that internal Righteouſneſs, of which thoſe legal Ceremonies were the Signs and Sacraments.*

This is the plain meaning of the Apoſtle,

Apostle, which can never be reconciled with an *imputed Righteousness*, which would make his argument foolish and absurd: and therefore in other places, he tells us, what little reason we have to be so zealous for the law of *Moses*, since we have the perfection of it in the Gospel: what need is there of the *Circumcision of the flesh*, which the law required? when in the Gospel *we have that Circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the Circumcision of Christ*; which is the δικαίωμα, the perfection of that fleshly Circumcision. What need is there of *legal washings and purifications?* when they are all eminently fulfilled in the *washing of Regeneration*, in the Gospel Baptism. Thus we *are compleat in Christ*, who hath perfectly instructed us in the will of God, and instituted such a Religion as is the perfection of all external Ceremonies; *Col.* 2. *Ver.* 10, 11, 12. We must now offer a nobler Sacrifice than the law of *Moses* commanded, not the Sacrifices of dead Beasts, but of a living and active Soul. *Rom.* 12. 1.

Hence Christ is called τέλος νόμου, *the end of the law*, *i.e.* the perfection and accom-

accomplishment of the law (as τέλος signifies) *for righteousness to them, that believe*; *Rom.* 10. 4. That is, the *Gospel of Christ* requires that righteousness of us, which the *law* did only typifie and represent, that holiness and purity of mind which is the perfection of all legal righteousness: for that Christ should be made *the end of the law for righteousness* by the *imputation* of his righteousness to us, hath no foundation in the Text. The Apostle explains what he means by this in the following Verses, where he gives us a description of the *righteousness of the law*, and the *righteousness of Faith*: The righteousness of the law is an external Conformity to the letter of the Law, *The man that doth them shall live in them*: *i. e.* shall enjoy all those temporal blessings of the Land of *Canaan*, which were promised to the observance of the Law: but the righteousness of Faith is a firm and stedfast belief of the Divine Authority of Christ, *that he is the Lord*; and more particularly a belief of his *Resurrection from the dead*, as the last and great confirmation, which God gave to the Divinity of Christs Person and Doctrine: This is that Faith that over-

overcomes the World, and purifies the heart, and transforms us into the likeneſs of God, which is the perfection of all the ritual righteouſneſs of the Law.

Upon this account Chriſt is ſaid to be *made unto us righteouſneſs.* 1 *Cor.* 1. 20. *But of him are you in Chriſt, who of God is made unto us Wiſdom, and Righteouſneſs, and Sanctification, and Redemption: i. e.* he is the Author of all this to us; He is *our Wiſdom*, as he is our great Prophet and Teacher, who inſtructs us in true Wiſdom; *Our Righteouſneſs*, as we are juſtified by Faith in him, by a ſincere belief of his Goſpel, which is the only Righteouſneſs acceptable to God; *Our Sanctification*, becauſe the *law of the ſpirit of life in Chriſt Jeſus, makes us free from the law of ſin and death:* that Divine and Spiritual *law of Faith* conquers the Power and Dominion of ſin, which the *law of Moſes* could not do: and *our Redemption*, as by theſe means he hath deliver'd us from the bondage and pedagogie of the Jewiſh Law, from the Idolatrous Cuſtoms of the Heathens, and the Tyranny of wicked Spirits, and from the wrath of God, which is the juſt merit and deſert of ſin.

Thus

Thus you see how the Apostle opposes the *righteousness of the law* to the *righteousness of Faith*, not as an *Inherent* and *Personal* to an *Imputed* Righteousness, but as an *External* and *Ritual* to an *Inherent, real*, and *substantial* Righteousness, this is the πρῶτον ψεῦδος, the foundation of all other mistakes in this matter, that by the *righteousness of the law*, and the *righteousness of works*, most men understand an internal holiness, the Conformity of our hearts and lives to all moral Precepts, and Rules of a good life, and then conclude, that if this Righteousness will not please God, nothing but an *Imputed Righteousness* can, though I should rather have concluded, that nothing can; but the truth is, the Righteousness of the Law and of Works in the New Testament, signifies only an *external* Righteousness, which cannot please God, and that internal holiness, which they call the righteousness of the Law, is that very Righteousness of Faith, which the Gospel commands, and which God approves and rewards; and this *Imputed Righteousness* is no where to be found, that I know of, but in their own fancies.

Let us now consider in what sense the Apostle opposes his *own* Righteousness to the Righteousness of God: *not having mine own Righteousness, but the Righteousness which is of God by Faith*; and there is no great difficulty in this; for the Apostle himself tells us, that by his *own righteousness*, he means the *righteousness of the law*, and by the *Righteousness of God*, *the Righteousness of Faith*: *And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the Faith of Christ, the Righteousness which is of God by Faith*: and what that is, you have already heard: thus in *Rom.* 10. 3. *For they being ignorant of Gods Righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the Righteousness of God*: where their *own righteousness*, which the Jews so obstinately adhered to, was the *righteousness of the law*, and the *Righteousness of God*, which they were ignorant of, and would not submit to, was the *Righteousness of Faith*: for this was the great controversie between the Jews and Apostles (which is the subject of this Epistle) whether men were to be justified by the *law of Moses*,

Moses, or by the *Gospel of Christ*, by a legal, or Evangelical Righteousness, as appears from *Rom.* 9. 30. *Israel, which followed after righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness; wherefore? because they sought it not by Faith, but as it were by the works of the law*: that is the *Israelites*, who pursued so earnestly after Righteousness, are excluded from righteousness, or forgiveness of sins, and are under a Curse, because they did not look for Righteousness, and Justification in the way, which God prescribed, which is *by Faith in Christ*, or *by Christianity*, but by the observance of the *law of Moses*.

Now the most obvious Reason, why this *righteousness of the law* is called their *own righteousness*, and the *Righteousness of Faith, Gods Righteousness*, is, because this *legal righteousness* was a way of justification, not of Gods appointment but their own chusing; God never designed, that any man should be justified to eternal life by observing the law of *Moses*, but yet they confidently expected justification by that Law, and for that reason rejected the Gospel of Christ: But the *righteousness of Faith* is a righteousness of Gods,

chusing; this he approves and accepts of for the justification of a Sinner; *by this the Elders obtained a good report*, by this *Enoch*, and *Noah*, and *Abraham* were justified before God: and therefore this may well be called the *Righteousness of God*, because this he appointed, and this he will owne, and reward. Thus, you see, that there is no foundation in Scripture for all this talk of a *Personal Righteousness of Christ inherent in him*, and *imputed to us*: but the righteousness of which the Scripture speaks, is not the righteousness of Christs Person but of his Gospel, that is, that way of Righteousness and Justification, which Christ hath revealed in his Gospel.

I have now considered all the *Personal Graces* of Christ, (as these men call them) and upon inquiry it appears, that what they appropriate to his *Person*, belongs to his *Gospel*, and is intended to describe the perfection and excellency of his Religion, as being the most perfect Revelation of the will of God, the most powerful method of his wisdom for the reforming the World, the only way to life and immortality, and which prescribes the only

only Righteousnes, which is acceptable to God.

There is indeed one metaphorical expression still behind, which exercises mens wits and fancies, *viz* the *riches of Christ*, *Eph.* 3. 8. Which must needs be a *personal Grace* too, or Personal Estate, or what you will call it: *unto me, who am the least of all Saints, is this Grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.* Where by the *unsearchable riches* of Christ is meant the Gospel, which St. *Paul* preached to the Gentiles, as being ordained by Christ to be the Apostle of the Gentiles: and he calls it *unsearchable riches*, because the Grace of the Gospel is not a narrow and stinted thing, is not confined to a particular Nation, as the law was, but is offer'd to all Mankind, whether Jews or Gentiles, bond or free: the Gospel of Christ contains those glorious discoveries of Gods goodnes to all Mankind, as may well be called the riches of his Grace, *Eph.* 1. 7. for riches signifie only an abundance.

And is it not a great violation of the Majesty of Scripture to sport and toy with words and metaphors, as some

men do with this riches of Christ: *that he is rich, because he hath a rich dowry, having all the World given to him, as his proper Inheritance; that he keeps open House, and maintains all the Creation at his own charge, and that he hath done this above 6000 years, which would have broke him long since, had he not been very rich; and that he doth not only inrich all the Saints, but all of the Saints, their understandings with glorious light, their Consciences with quickness, pureness, &c. and that after all this vast expence he is never the poorer, that he is not a penny the poorer for all, that he hath laid out for the relief of those that have their dependance on him; And that Jesus Christ is generally rich, rich in Houses and Lands* (though he had not a place whereon to lay his head) *in gold, in silver, in Cattel, in all temporals as well as spirituals; and that he hath a great Tribute and Rent due to him, that he is the great Landlord and Owner of all, that Angels and men possess above and below;* These are fine things to perswade young Women to accept of Christ for their Husband, since they can never expect so rich and advantageous a match any where else: but

Brooks Riches of Christ.

but I have something else to do, than to pursue such follies and extravagancies, as are so palpable, that there is no need to expose them.

SECT. III.

Concerning the nature of our Union to Christ, whereby we are intitled to all his fulness, Righteousness, &c.

HAving showed you what kind of *Person* these men make of Christ, how they have fitted him to all the wants and necessities of a Sinner, let us now consider, wherein this Union they talk of, between the *Person* of Christ and the *Persons* of Believers does consist.

Now the *Union* betwixt Christ and Christians is represented in Scripture by various metaphors, which I have explained at large: but these men instead of explaining these metaphors, turn all Religion into an Allegory: As for example, Christ is called an *Husband*, and

the Church his *Sponse*; and now all the invitations of the Gospel are Christs *wooing* and *making love* to his Spouse, and what other men call *believing the Gospel of Christ*, whereby we devote our selves to his service, these men call that *consent and contract*, *which makes up the marriage betwixt Christ and Believers*: Christ takes *us* for his Spouse, and we take Christ for our *Husband*, and that with all the solemnities of marriage (except the *Ring* which is left out as an Antichristian Ceremony) Christ saying thus, *This is that we will consent unto, that I will be for thee, and thou shalt be for me; and not for another. Christ gives himself to the Soul with all his excellencies, righteousness, preciousness, graces, and eminencies, to be its Saviour, Head, and Husband, to dwell with it in this holy Relation, and the Soul likes Christ for his excellencies, Graces, suitableness far above all other Beloveds whatever, and accepts of Christ by the will for its Husband, Lord and Saviour*; and thus the Marriage is compleated, and *this is the day of Christs espousals, of the gladness of his heart*; and now follow all *mutual conjugal affections*; which on Christs

Dr. Owen Com.

part

part consist *in delight, valuation, pity, or compassion, and bounty*: on the Saints part in *delight, valuation, Chastity, duty*; which is much like Mr. *Hobs* his Description of his *Artificial Man* the *Common-wealth*: But I have already corrected this fooling with Scripture-Metaphors, and Phrases, and my business at present is to consider, wherein they place the nature of this *Union betwixt Christ and Believers*; namely in this, that it is such an Union, *as makes all Christ ours, and us Christs*: when a man is united to Christ, he hath a propriety and interest in all his Personal Graces and Eminencies: *He is lovely with Christs loveliness, Righteous with Christs Righteousness, the Wisdom, and Power, and fulness* of Christ are his; whatever Christ hath done, or suffer'd, is all his as much, as if he had done and suffer'd the same things himself.

Now this *Union of Persons* betwixt Christ and Believers, which gives them such a propriety in all the *Personal Graces* of Christ, is commonly explained by a *conjugal relation*, and *legal Union*, that mutual Relation, which is betwixt Husband and Wife, and that Union, which is betwixt the Surety and Debtor.

First,

1. First, They explain this *Union* by a *conjugal Relation*, Christ is a *Spiritual Husband*, and every *Believer* is his *Spouse*, now this *marriage Union* consists in a *mutual resignation or making over their Persons one to another; Christ gives himself to the Soul with all his Excellencies, Righteousness, Graces and Eminencies to be its Saviour, Head and Husband, for ever to dwell with it in this holy Relation:* now as you know, *the Wife by vertue of her Marriage-Union is entitled to her Husbands Estate, thus are Saints by their marriage to Christ entitled to all his Personal fulness, beauty, righteousness: and as a Wife under covert is not lyable to an arrest, or action at law, but all must fall upon her Husband, so you being married to Christ, this Supersedes the Process of the Law against you; if it be not fully satisfied, it must seek its reparation at the hand of your Spiritual Husband Christ himself; as for any condemnatory charge, it cannot fall upon you.* This is the sum of all the Reason, they alledge to prove that we have a right and title to whatever Christ hath done or suffer'd, by vertue of our marriage to him, because a Wife hath an Interest in her Husbands

Dr. Owen Com. p. 60.

Dr. Jacomb Rom. 8. p. 85.

Husbands Estate, and is secur'd from all Arrests at Law, and if these be not weighty reasons, let any man, that can, give better.

To consider this briefly, they say, *that a Wife hath an Interest in her Husbands Estate, and is secured from all Arrests at Law;* and therefore, *Christ being our Husband all his Personal excellencies righteousness, &c. are ours; and the Law cannot take hold of us, but our Husband must be responsible for our faults:* a very hard Law truly, and I think a Husband is in a very ill Case, when he has a bad Wife: Now suppose this were the Case in some earthly marriages, it were worth while to consider, whether this be *essential to marriage*, or whether it depends upon *private contracts*, or *publick Laws and Customs*, which are arbitrary and mutable; for if this be not essential to marriage, how can we be secure, that this is the law of our *spiritual marriage*, unless our *spiritual Husband* had told us so: especially considering, that this *spiritual marriage* betwixt *Christ* and his *Church* is of a different nature from *earthly marriages*, and if they differ in any thing we cannot be sure, but that they

they differ in this, unleſs we have ſome better proof of it, than this Analogy and reſemblance between earthly and ſpiritual marriages; nay and better proof too, than Dr. *Owen* gives us of it. *Cant.* 1. 15. *Behold thou art fair my Companion, behold thou art fair, thou haſt Doves Eyes*, and Cant. 3. 14. *O my Dove, that art in the cleſts of the Rocks, and in the ſecret places of the ſtairs, let me hear thy voice, let me ſee thy countenance, for ſweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely*, or Cant. 4. 8. *Come with me from* Lebanon *my Spouſe, look from the top of* Amana, *from the top of* Shenir *and* Hermon, *from the Lions Dens, and the Mountain of the Leopards*, or Iſai. 4. 2. *The branch of the Lord is beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth is excellent and comely to them, that are eſcaped of* Iſrael: which are all the proofs he can find (for if he had any better, he did ill to conceal them) for *Chriſts giving himſelf to the Soul with all his Excellencies, Righteouſneſs, Preciouſneſs, Graces, Eminencies, &c.* Now how any ſuch conſequence as this can be drawn, either from *Doves Eyes*, or from the *Cleſts of the Rocks*, or *from Lebanon*, or

from

from the top of Amana, Shenir, or *Hermon,* or from the *Lions Dens,* or *Mountain of Leopards,* is past my understanding to make out. But let the Laws of Kingdoms and Nations be as they will, there can be no Law made to alter the nature of things; there never was any Law, that the *Personal vertues and qualities and perfections of the Husband should be setled upon his Wife for a jointure:* though the Husband be never so fair and comely, wise and vertuous, his Wife may be ugly and deformed, a Fool or a Harlot; for *Personal* and *Inherent* perfections cannot pass out of the *Person,* nor be made over to any other, as money and lands are: and therefore whatever other priviledges we may enjoy by our marriage to Christ, his *Personal excellencies* cannot be ours, though his *Person* were.

And we know, that in marriage, there are private contracts too, and the Wives interest in her Husbands Estate may be limited to such conditions, as they agree upon: and the truth is Christ hath not made such an absolute settlement of himself upon us, as these men dream he has; for the

Gospel

Gospel contains the Articles of this Marriage (to speak in these mens dialect) and there we must learn to what purposes, and upon what conditions, Christ gives himself to us, and must challenge no more from Christ by vertue of our marriage to him, than what the Gospel (the marriage Covenant) promises, and we find nothing there of his *Personal Righteousness* to be made ours. As for what they tell us, that *a Woman under covert is not liable to an Arrest or action at the law, but all must fall upon her Husband*, it is true as to matter of Debt; but does not extend to Crimes: if a Woman kill her Child, or rob upon the High-way, I doubt her being under covert will not secure her from the Gallows: was it never known that a Woman was hang'd either with or without her Husband? The Keeper of *Newgate* could have better informed them in this nice point of Divinity: and how secure soever any man may fancy himself of his marriage to Christ, I would not advise him to venture too much upon it, for if he be guilty of any gross wilful sin, there is some danger, that the law or Gospel may condemn him, unless he timely

timely repent, and reform his Vices.

So that this *conjugal Relation* to Christ does not make him so absolutely ours, as these men pretend, who by their loose discourses and inconsequent reasonings seem neither to understand *Divine* nor *Humane Laws*: when the Scripture calls *Christ* our *Husband*, and the *Church* his *Sponse*, it means no more, but that Christ is our *Head and Governour*, who rules his Church with as great kindness, tenderness and compassion, as a Husband exerciseth towards his Wife, and that we are to pay the same love, duty, and obedience to Christ, that Wives owe to their Husbands; and here we must have done with the *Metaphor*, unless we will turn Religion into a *Romance*.

Secondly, Christ and Believers are *legally* united: now there are two different ways of explaining this, some insist most upon the notion of a *Surety*, others of a *Mediatour*, which come much to one, but yet have some peculiar absurdities belonging to each of them: as for the notion of a *Surety*, which is the first way, Dr. *Jacomb* gives us this account of it, that *Christ*, *as the Saints* ערב, or *Surety*, *struck* 2. *Ibid.*

hands

hands with God (as the word imports) put himself into their stead, took their Debt upon himself, and bound himself upon their account to make satisfaction to God: now in law the Debtor and the Surety are but one Person, the law looks upon them as one, and makes no difference between them, and therefore both are equally liable to the Debt, and if the one pay it, it is as much in the eye of the law, as if the other had paid it: Thus it is with Christ and us, he is our Surety, for he took our Debt upon himself, engaged to pay whatever we owed, for us; upon this, Christ and we are but one Person before God, and accordingly he deals with us; for he makes over our sins to Christ, and also Christs Righteousness and satisfaction to us, he now in a legal notion looking upon both but as one Person.

This is the account of Christ's being our *Surety*, now I have two things to say to this. First, I wonder why this should be called the *Union of Saints to Christ?* or why Christ should be called *only* the *Saints Surety?* The Apostle tells us, that he is ἔγγυος διαθήκης *Hebr.* 7. 22. *The Surety of a Testament or Covenant:* now as I take it, there is a vast

vast difference between *Christ's being the Saints Surety*, and the *Surety of the Covenant*, for the *Covenant* respects both *Saints* and *Sinners*, and therefore is antecedent to our *Union to Christ*, *as Saints:* and to be a *Surety of the Covenant* signifies no more than to confirm and ratifie this Covenant, and to undertake for the performance of it, that all the promises of the Covenant shall be made good upon such terms and conditions, as are annexed to them; but to be *a Surety for Saints*, (as the Dr. explains it) *is to strike hands with God*, (as men do at making a bargain) *and to put himself into their stead to do and to suffer, what they ought to have done and suffer'd, upon which God makes over our sins to Christ, and Christs Righteousness and satisfaction to us*; Now this notion is so different from the notion of a Surety of a Covenant, that methinks it wants some better proof, than barely Christ's being called a *Surety*, or the *Surety of a Covenant.*

But Secondly, Suppose Christ had been called the *Saints Surety*, I doubt they are as much out in the *law of Suretiship*, as they were before in the *laws of marriage*; though the Dr. tells

us, *that this doth so exactly fall in with the common notion and case of Suretiship among men, that he needs not any further insist on the illustration of it.* I confess, I am of another mind, and think it wants a great deal more illustration, than he hath bestowed on it. For first the prime end and design of Suretiship among men, is not that the Surety shall without more ado pay the Debt, but to give security to the Creditor that the Debt shall be paid: that is, the *Surety* doth not make himself the *immediate* Debtor; but the Debtor is Debtor still, and bound to pay the Debt, and the Surety is liable only in case of his default. It is the strangest definition of Suretiship, that was ever heard of, that it is *an absolute taking the Debt upon our selves*, and an actual discharge of the Debtor. For I dare say, never any man was surety upon these terms, that is, no man in his wits ever became Surety for another, when he knew before hand, that if he did, he must pay the Debt; but men become Sureties upon some reasonable assurance, that they shall suffer no injury by it; and therefore when Christ died for us, he did not die as our *Surety*, but

but as *our Sacrifice* substituted in our room, which is the Scripture notion of it, and differs as much from the notion of a surety, as paying the debt doth from being bound with another, that it shall be paid.

Secondly, Suppose that *Christ dyed for us as our surety*, (though I think, however the Doctor triumphs in this, the *Socinians* have no reason to be afraid of such Adversaries, who have no better way to defend the *Satisfaction* of Christ, than by the notion of suretiship) yet did *Christ fulfil all Righteousness for us as our surety too?* Doth this also *so exactly answer the case of suretiship among men, that there is no need to insist upon the Illustration of it?* The Doctor indeed was so wise, that he would not assert this in the premises, but very craftily thrusts it into the Conclusion, that *therefore God makes over our sins to Christ, and Christs Righteousness and Satisfaction to us:* But was there ever such a suretiship heard of among men, that one man should discharge all the offices of Piety and Vertue, Justice and Temperance instead of another? If such a thing had ever been, such a man ought not to

have been called a *Surety*, but a *Proxie*; but humane Laws, as many defects as there are in them, never admitted of such Proxies, for these are personal duties, which no other can perform for us; and you may as well say, that a man may live and be a man by Proxy, as discharge those Duties, which are necessarily entailed on his *Person* by a *Proxy*: Proxies are allowable only in such cases, where the consideration of the person that doth it, is not essential to the Action, where the material Inquiry is, whether the thing be done, not who doth it; but where the consideration of the person that doth it, is essential to the Action, there is no place for a Surety or Proxy (call him what you will) because in this case it doth not satisfie the Law, that the thing is done, unless it be done by such a person: Thus it is in all the Duties of Piety and Religion, every individual person is bound to do them, and though there were never so many righteous men in the world, their righteousness can avail none but themselves; nay the *Righteousness of God*, which is more than the righteousness of all the men in the world, cannot make an unrighteous

man righteous; no *external Relation* can make the righteousness of another our righteousness, because it is a personal righteousness that is required of us, and the righteousness of another can never be our *personal righteousness*, unless we become *one person* with him: and therefore though the Doctor be so careful to tell us, that *our Union to Christ is an Union of Persons, but no Personal Union, that we are not transformed into the Essence and Being of Christ, so as to be Christed with Christ*, yet indeed there is no other way to make the *Personal Righteousness* of Christ our *personal* righteousness (which is the righteousness required of us) but by a *Personal Union* to Christ, *by being Christed with Christ*, as some speak how *boldly* soever, yet very agreeably to these Principles.

But Thirdly, Let us consider what truth there is in what he asserts, *That in the Law the debtor and the surety are but one person, the Law looks upon them but as one, and therefore both are equally liable to the debt, and if the one pay it, it is as much in the eye of the Law, as if the other had paid it*, which he makes the Foundation of the *Imputation of*

Christs Righteousness and Satisfaction to us, because *he being our surety, we are but one person with him*; that is, *legally, not personally one person* as he warily distinguishes.

Now there needs no great skill in the Law to discover the weakness and Sophistry of this Discourse: for no considering man can think it indifferent, who pays the debt, the surety or the debtor, or that they are both equally obliged to it; the debtor is the immediate debtor still, and the surety only is obliged in case the other refuse, or be unable to pay the debt, and that is some little difference: but then though the creditor be satisfied, whether the debt be paid by the debtor, or his surety, and the Law will allow him no farther Action against either of them, yet the Law doth not account it indifferent, which of them pay it; for though it permit the payment to be exacted from the surety, in case the debtor refuse, yet it will look back again, and allow the surety an Action against the debtor for such a refusal, which is an Argument, that the Law doth not judge them *one Person*, nor think it indifferent which of them pays the debt.

Thus

Thus it is in other cases, if a man be surety for the appearance of another, which is called giving Bail, and is sometimes admitted in Criminal Causes; the Law doth not judge them *one Person*; for if the Prisoner escape, the Bail or Surety shall be punisht according to the nature of the Fact, and yet the Prisoner is not quitted by this means, but liable either to the Arrest of the Surety, or in Criminal Causes to the Sentence of the Law, if ever he be re-taken.

Thus in Sureties for good Behaviour (which sounds as if it were neareſt of kin to the Imputation of Christs Righteousness as our surety) though the surety be never so innocent and vertuous a person himself, this will not serve him, for whom he is surety; but if he prove a Villain, they shall be both punisht: So that humane Laws are strangers to this Mystery of imputing the Righteousness of a Surety to a bad man. Suretiship doth not so unite their persons, that whatever one doth, is always and to all purposes imputed to the other; and if this will not hold good among men, it is a very sorry foundation for this bargain and ex-

change betwixt Christ and Believers, *That he should take their sins upon himself, and impute his Righteousness to them.*

Let us now try, whether the notion of a *Mediator* can do any better service, than the notion of a *Surety*, which is the *second way* of explaining this *legal Union* betwixt Christ and Believers, which entitles them to all that Christ hath done or suffered: and what this means, we may learn from Dr. *Owen*, who gives us this account of it: *That Christ fulfilled all Righteousness, as he was Mediator, and that whatever he did as Mediator, he did it for them, whose Mediator he was, or in whose stead, and for whose good he executed the office of a Mediator before God*; and hence it is, *that his compleat and perfect obedience to the Law, is reckoned to us.* This is well said, if it were as well proved, and because this is a matter of great consequence, I shall first examine those reasons the *Dr.* alledges to prove, *That Christ fulfilled all Righteousness, as he was Mediator in their stead, whose Mediator he was:* Secondly, to avoid calumnies and objections, I shall shew you briefly *what influence the Righteousness of Christs*

Communion with the Son, Chap. 6. p. 182.

Christs life, and the Sacrifice of his death have upon our acceptance with God.

As for the first, we have some reason to require good proof of this, since the notion of a *Mediator* includes no such thing: A *Mediator* is one, who interposes between two differing parties, to accommodate the difference: but it was never heard of yet, that it was the office of a Mediator to perform the terms and conditions himself. *Moses* was the *Mediator* of the first Covenant, *Gal.* 3. 9. and his office was to receive the Law from God, and to deliver it to the people, and to command them to observe those Rites, and Sacrifices, and Expiations, which God had ordained; but he was not to fulfil the *Righteousness of the Law* for the *whole Congregation:* thus *Christ* is now the *Mediator of a better Covenant*, and his Office required, that he should preach the Gospel, which contains the terms of peace and reconciliation between God and men, and since God would not enter into Covenant with sinners without the intervention of a Sacrifice, he dyes too as a *Sacrifice* and *Propitiation* for the sins of the world, and confirms and seals this new Covenant

nant with his own blood, and being risen again from the dead, he executes this Office of Mediator with power and glory, that is, he intercedes for us according to the terms and conditions of this new Covenant, to obtain the pardon of our sins, and the assistance of the divine Grace to do the will of God; and all those other blessings which are promised: but the Office of Mediator doth not oblige him to fulfil the *Righteousness of the Covenant* for us; this I am sure doth not *so exactly fall in with the case and notion of Mediatorship among men.*

But before we examine their proofs, it is necessary to consider, what it is they would prove, that is, *what that Righteousness is, which, they say, Christ as our Mediator* fulfilled for us: and Dr. *Owen* is very exact and curious in stating this matter, and distinguishes between the several sorts of Righteousness in Christ, that we may know, what belongs to us, and what is peculiar to himself.

Communion with the Son, p. 178.

First he tells us of *an habitual Righteousness of Christ as Mediator in his humane Nature, which was the absolute, compleat, exact conformity of the Soul of Christ*

Christ to the mind, will, or law of God, or his perfect, habitual, Inherent Righteousness: now he tells us, that this Righteousness *was the necessary effect of the Grace of Union* (that is of the Union of the Divine and Humane nature in Christ) and that *the Relation which this Righteousness of Christ hath to the Grace we receive from him, is this, that thereby he was* ἱκανὸς, *fit to do all that he had to do for us; for without this he could not have actually fulfilled that Righteousness which was required at his hand, nor have been a compleat and perfect Sacrifice, &c.* So that this *habitual, inherent Righteousness* of Christ, is not *imputed* to us, but was his *own proper Righteousness.*

But secondly, *There is the actual obedience of Christ, which was his willing, chearful, obediential performance, of every thing, duty, and command, that God by vertue of any Law, whereto we were subject and obnoxious, did require, and moreover to the peculiar Law of the Mediator:* Let us then first consider the *peculiar Law of the Mediator*, which he tells us *respected himself meerly* (so that we have nothing to do with this neither) *and*

contains

contains all thoſe acts and duties of his, which were not for our imitation, he inſtances *in his obedience which he ſhowed in dying* (though St. *John* the *Divine*, (and I think the greater of the two) tells us, that we muſt imitate him in this alſo, *muſt lay down our lives for the Brethren*, as Chriſt died for us. *John* 1. 3. 16. and S. *Paul* tells us, that we *muſt be conformed to the Death and Reſurrection of Chriſt*, *Rom.* 6. which ſounds very like an *imitation*) though in the next page he excepts the Caſe of *dying*, of his *paſſive obedience*, and tells us, *that all the reſt of his obedience to the Law of mediation is not imputed to us, as though we had done it.* So that by the *Law of Mediation* he underſtands whatever Chriſt was bound to do, as our Mediator, whatever was proper to his Mediatory Office, all this (though ſometimes, when he better thinks of it, he excepts *dying*) is not imputed to us, as though we had done it: I hope we ſhall find ſomething at laſt to be imputed to us, and yet there is nothing left now. But thirdly, That which concerns him in a private capacity, *as a man ſubject to the Law*, and now *whatever was required of us by vertue of*

any

any Law, that he did and fulfilled; and this is *that actual obedience of Christ, which he performed for us.*

This methinks is very ſtrange, that what he did as Mediator, is not imputed to us, but what he did not as our *Mediator*, but *as a man ſubject to the law*, that is imputed to us, and reckoned, as if we had done it, by reaſon of his being our Mediator: and it is as ſtrange to the full, that Chriſt ſhould do, *whatever was required of us by vertue of any law*, when he was neither Huſband nor Wife, nor Father, Merchant or Tradeſman, Seaman or Souldier, Captain or Lieutenant, much leſs a temporal Prince or Monarch; and how he ſhould diſcharge the duties of theſe ſeveral relations for us, which are required of us by certain Laws, when he never was in any of theſe relations, and could not poſſibly be in all, is an argument, which may exerciſe the ſubtilty of *Schoolmen*, and to them I leave it.

Having now diſcovered *what that Righteouſneſs is, which Chriſt was to fulfil for us, as our Mediator*, viz. *whatever was required of us by vertue of any law*, whether it concerned us in gene-

ral

ral as men, or had respect to the various relations, conditions and circumstances of our lives (for each of these have their proper duties belonging to them) setting aside that difficulty of proving that Christ did, what he never did, let us consider how the Dr. proves, that what Christ did, he did for us, and in our stead, and here he makes use of a little reason, and a great deal of Scripture to as little purpose. And to prepare the way for his reasons, I find the Dr. much puzled (and I do not wonder at it) to prove, that *Christ acted as Mediator in those things, which did not concern the law of his Mediation*, which he did *as a private man subject to the law:* for he tells us, that of this expression, *as Mediator*, there is a double sense. *It may be taken strictly, as relating solely to the law of the Mediator, and so Christ may be said to do as Mediator, only what he did in obedience to that law*, (that is, only what he did *as Mediator*, which is a pretty observation) *but in the sense now insisted on* (that is *not strictly as Mediator*, but as *not Mediator*) *whatever Christ did as a man subject to the Law, he did as Mediator, because he did it*

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it as part of the duty incumbent on him, who undertook so to be: the meaning of which is, that he, who was Mediator, being bound to do such things, though not *as Mediator, but as a man subject to the law*, yet he did them *as Mediator*, because he was *a Mediator*, who did them: which is just as good an argument, as it would be to prove, that every *Embassadour eats, and drinks, and sleeps, as an Embassadour*, because though this be no part of his *Embassy*, yet he is an *Embassadour*, who does it, which is such an exposition of *Quâ*, as the subtilest *Schoolman* of them all never yet thought of.

But there is another objection which troubles the Doctors Head; for since it is the *actual obedience* of Christ, which is imputed to us, he finds it difficult to distinguish the *Active* and *Passive* obedience of Christ: *for every Act almost of Christs obedience from the blood of his Circumcision to the blood of his Cross, was attended with sufferings, so that his whole life in that regard might be called a death:* this is a very subtil objection, but observe the answer, that *looking upon his willingness and obedience in it, it may be distinguished from his*

his ſufferings peculiarly ſo called, and termed his active obedience: this is a ſtrange ſolution of it, for now it will be as hard to find out what the *paſſive obedience* of Chriſt was, for as I remember the Scripture tells us, that he was as willing and chearful in ſubmitting to Death, as in any other Act of obedience, and I am ſure our *Saviour himſelf* tells us, *that he laid down his life, and no man took it from him*, which argues ſome good degree of *willingneſs:* what he ſaid in the page before is a much better anſwer, *that doing is one thing, and ſuffering another, they are in divers Predicaments, and cannot be coincident.*

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As for this laſt ſcruple, the Dr. might very well have ſpared it, but that a man ſo well furniſhed with the knowledge of *Predicaments*, may venture upon any thing; but the former difficulty *of Chriſts doing thoſe things as Mediator, which did not belong to the Laws of his Mediation*, is a very material one, and requires great ſkill in Logick to get rid of it; but however it is wiſely done to make a ſhow of ſaying ſomething to that, which cannot be anſwer'd: for he was ſenſible, that what

what Christ did *purely as Mediator could not be imputed to us, as though we had done it, though the* ἀποτελέσματα *or fruits of it are,* because we were never designed to be *Mediators*, and the *Righteousness* of a *Mediator* is as improper to be *imputed* to those who are not *Mediators*, as it is to impute the *Righteousness* of a *Prince* to a *Beggar*. The righteousness of every man consists in the discharge of those duties and offices, which belong to his state, condition, and relations of life, not in doing those things, which he is not concerned to do; and therefore that the Righteousness of Christ might be fit to be imputed to us as our Righteousness, he was forced to consider him, not as *Mediator*, but as a *private person made subject to the Law, who did whatever was required of us by vertue of any Law*, though this too was impossible, for he could not at the same time act so many different and opposite parts, as there are relations and conditions of men in the World; and yet when he thought on't again, he found, that it was not the Righteousness of a *private person*, that would avail us, though it were never so perfect (because we have no way to come at it, to make it ours) but only the

Pag. 181.

Righteousness of a Mediator, who did whatever he did, for us and in our stead, and so he wheels about again, and tells us, that though what Christ did as a man subject to the Law, did not belong to the Law of his Mediation, yet he did it as Mediator, because he was a Mediator who did it: and thus he is caught in the Net and Labyrinth of his own making, and the more he turns and windes himself, the faster it holds him, *A Mediator, who acts as a Mediator, in a private capacity, as a man subject to the Law.* I shall certainly believe, as they say some Country-people do, that *Logick is Conjuring*, if it can reconcile such palpable contradictions.

It is very *ominous* thus to stumble at the threshold, but though *Mediator* and not a *Mediator* be contradictory terms, which Learned men say cannot be reconciled, yet let us forgive him that slip, and see how he proves, that *whatever Christ did is reckoned to us, as done in our stead*; and all the reason I can find in his Discourse may be reduced to three Heads; first, *that Christ was under no obligation to do it himself*; secondly, *that there can be no other reason assigned,*

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assigned, why he did it at all, but that he did it for us, and thirdly, *that this was absolutely necessary it should be so.*

First, *That Christ was under no obligation to obey these Laws himself,* and to make this appear, he discourses particularly both of the *Law of our Creation,* and the *Ceremonial Law given to the Jews.*

As for the first, *the Law of Creation,* that comprehends those eternal Laws, which result from the essential differences of good and evil, which all Mankind are bound to observe by the very frame and constitution of their natures: now he dares not deny, that Christ was bound to obey this Law *for himself,* but then *his obedience* (he says) *was voluntary*; and what of that? for so the obedience of every good man is: for by *voluntary,* he tells us, he doth not mean, that it *was meerly arbitrary, and at his choice, whether he would yield obedience to it, or not; but on supposition of his undertaking to be a Mediator, it was necessary it should be so; but he voluntarily and willingly submitted unto it, and so became really subject to the commands of it,* and is it not very plain now, that Christ was not obliged to obey these Laws, because *he*

willingly submitted to them? But certainly he means something more by this *voluntary*, than he could tell how to express, and all that I can guess is, that whereas *we* are bound to obey these Laws *antecedentally to our own choice*, it was not so with *him*, for his obligation was only *consequential* upon his being born, and becoming Man, which was his own choice; and yet even then, as he tells us, *as he was Mediator, God and Man, he was not by the Institution of that Law obliged to it, being as it were exempted, and lifted above that Law by the Hypostatical Union.* Now this is very profound reasoning; for the meaning of it is this, that Christ had not been bound to live like a man, unless he had become man, and yet I can grant something more; that it was *impossible* he should have lived *like a man*, discharged all the duties of a man without *being man*; but when he chose to be a man, there was no need to chuse any more; for then he was bound by the Laws of his Nature to discharge all the duties of a man for himself: But how could he be *exempted from this Law* (though it be but *as it were*) and raised above it by *being Mediator, God and*

and Man, when the Doctor himself acknowledges two lines after, that *upon supposition of his being Mediator, it was necessary it should be so*, that is, that he should yield obedience to the Law; now *not to be obliged by the Institution of the Law as Mediator*, and that it should *be necessary for him to obey the Law as Mediator*, are at so great a distance, that it may serve for another tryal of skill to reconcile them.

But Secondly, Though we suppose, that Christ as Man was bound to yield obedience *to the Laws of the Creation*, yet the Doctor observes, *that this is the only Law, he could be liable to, as a Man: for an innocent man in a Covenant of works, as he was, needed no other Law, nor did God ever give any other Law to such persons: the Law of Creation is the only Law, that an innocent Creature is liable to, with what Symbols of the Law God is pleased to add:*——— But now *Jesus Christ yielded perfect obedience to all those Laws, which came upon us by the occasion of sin, as the Ceremonial Law, yea those very Institutions that signified the washing away of sin, and repentance from sin, as the Baptism of* John, *which he had no need of himself,*

this therefore must needs be for us. This now looks something like, though I fear, it will prove like all the rest, that is, to no purpose: for though the Doctor takes it for granted, yet I would willingly have had some proof of it, that an *innocent man can be bound by no other Law, than the Law of Creation*; especially since he acknowledges (which is a great favour) that God might add what *Symbols* he pleased to that Law; (for, I suppose, he remembred the *Tree of Life*, and the *Tree of knowledge of good and evil*) now I know not what these *Symbols* are but *positive Laws*, and such the *Ceremonial Laws* were; and if God may require the obedience of an *innocent man* to *one* positive Law, I see no reason, why he may not, if he please, enjoyn *twenty such Laws* by the same Authority. But *they are such Laws as came upon us by occasion of sin*, and therefore an *innocent man* cannot be obliged by them: but why not? Though they were at first commanded upon *occasion of sin*, an *innocent man* may observe them to good and wise purposes, as publick and solemn Acts of Worship, as external and visible expressions of devotion, as a pub-

a publick profeſſion of Righteouſneſs and a vertuous life, to which purpoſes among others the Sacrifices and Ceremonies of the Law, and the Baptiſm of *John* ſerved: And if there were no other reaſon, this were ſufficient, that it becomes an *innocent man* to ſet an example of reverence to all *Divine Inſtitutions*, that every conceited Religioniſt, (who may be far enough from being *innocent*) may not preſently conceit himſelf above all *Forms and external Worſhip*, as the Doctor knows, who are too apt to do.

But this is not worth contending about; for the *Righteouſneſs of the Ceremonial Law* could never juſtifie any man, and therefore if Chriſt had fulfilled this Law for us, it could have availed us nothing. Nor can I underſtand, why the Doctor ſhould ſuppoſe, that Chriſt fulfilled the Ceremonial Law for all Believers, when the greateſt part of them (the Gentiles) were never under the obligation of it.

His ſecond Argument to prove, that what Chriſt did as Mediator (that is, the actual obedience of his life) he did for us and in our ſtead, is this, that there *can be no other reaſon aſſigned of*

Christs obedience to the Law of God, but only this, that he did it in our stead. Now this Argument would be good, were it true, and were there not a great many things done, which we cannot assign the reason of, and yet done for great and weighty reasons; but it appears from what I have already discoursed, that there was sufficient reason, why Christ should obey the Laws of God, *viz.* because he was as much bound to it, as any other man is: But to wave this, let us consider how he manages this Argument: he takes it for granted (as he is very apt to do things, which he cannot prove) that if Christ were not bound to obey these Laws upon his own account, *it must be either for us, or to fit him for his death and oblation*, but it was not to fit him for his death and oblation, therefore it was for us: for he tells us, *That he answered all Types, and was every way ἱκανὸς, fit to be made an Offering for sin by his Union and habitual Grace; so that if the obedience Christ performed be not reckoned to us, and done upon our account, there is no just cause to be assigned, why he should live here in the World so long as he did, in perfect obedience to all the Laws of God; had he dyed before*

Communion, p. 182.

fore, there had been perfect innocence and perfect holiness by his habitual Grace, and infinite vertue and worth from the dignity of his Person, and surely he yielded not that long course of all manner of obedience but for some great and special purposes in reference to our Salvation: yes truly, it was *for some great and special purpose in reference to our Salvation*, that Christ lived so long in the World, and consequently *yielded such a long course of all manner of obedience to God*; but must this needs be *his actual fulfilling all Righteousness for us?* What do you think of his preaching the Gospel throughout all *Judæa*, which required, that he should be a man before he did it, and would take up some time in doing it? What do you think of those many Miracles, which he wrought for the confirmation of his Doctrine? What do you think of training up his Apostles to succeed him in his Ministry as eye and ear-witnesses of his Miracles and Doctrine? Nay what do you think of the holy example of his life, which was no less necessary than his Laws? These were all *great and special purposes in reference to our Salvation*, though we should suppose him fit to have been a *Sacrifice* (as *Hored*

od designed he should have been) as soon, as he was born: though by the way I think he could not have answered the *Types* and Predictions of him, had he died so soon, notwithstanding his *perfect innocence and perfect holiness.*

Communion, p. 185. His third reason to prove that Christ performed all Righteousness for us, is from the *absolute necessity of it; for this is the term of the Covenant, do this and live; life is not to be obtained, unless all be done that the Law requires; that is still true, if thou wilt enter into life keep the Commandments, they must be kept by us, or by our Surety: so that we being unable to yield that compleat and perfect obedience, which the Law requires, as the condition of life and happiness, it is necessary, that Christ our Mediator and Surety should fulfil the Law for us.* Now the best that can be made of this argument is, that it proves it ought to be so, but it does not prove that it is so; just like the Papists alledging the necessity of an infallible judge to prove, that the Pope or Church of *Rome* is infallible; but such arguments prove nothing but the arrogance and presumption of the disputant, who will undertake to prescribe methods to God, and to prove, that he ought to have done

done ſo, when it does not appear, that he has done ſo: the ſum of this argument is, that there never was, nor ever can be a *Covenant of Grace*, that God ſtill exacts the rigorous perfection of the Law from us, and that we muſt not appear before him without a *compleat and perfect righteouſneſs of our own, or of another:* now this is the thing in Queſtion, whether we muſt be made Righteous with the perfect Righteouſneſs of Chriſt imputed to us, or whether God will for the ſake of Chriſt diſpenſe with the rigour of the Law, and accept of a ſincere and Evangelical obedience, inſtead of a perfect and unſinning Righteouſneſs; ſo that he only confidently affirms what was in diſpute, and this goes for an argument.

Thus you ſee how weak their reaſon is, let us now examine their Scripture evidence; and the Dr. makes a great flouriſh with ſome Scripture phraſes, *that there is almoſt nothing that Chriſt hath done, but we are ſaid to do it with him: we are Crucified with him, we are dead with him, and buried with him, and quickned together with him, &c. In the actings of Chriſt, there is by vertue of the compact between him as Mediator, and the Father, ſuch an aſſured* Communion, p. 167:

assured foundation laid of the Communication of the fruit of these actings unto those in whose stead he performed them, that they are said in the participation of these fruits to have done the same things with him: But he is quite out in the reason of these expressions, which is, not that we are accounted to do the same things, which Christ did (for the things here mentioned belong to the peculiar Office of his Mediation, which he told us before were not reckon'd as done by us) but because we do some things like them: our dying to sin is a Conformity to the Death of Christ, and our walking in newness of life is our Conformity to his Resurrection, and the consideration of the Death and Resurrection of Christ, is very powerful to engage us to die to sin, and to rise into a new life; and this is the true reason of these phrases, not that Christ did all in our stead, and therefore we are said to do it too, but for a quite different reason because we must do something like it, express the power and image of his Death and Resurrection in our lives.

Communion, p. 184. To this purpose also he cites that Text in *Gal.* 4. 4, 5, *God sent forth his Son*

Son made of a Woman, made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law, and here he ſtops, but I ſhall take confidence to add, *that we might receive the adoption of Sons:* now by *being made under the Law,* he tells us, is meant *being diſpoſed of in ſuch a condition, that he muſt yield ſubjection and obedience to the Law,* well, ſuppoſe this: *and this was all to redeem us, and therefore our Redemption is by the obedience of Chriſt imputed to us:* fairly argued; but can his obedience to the Law contribute no otherways to our redemption, but by being reckon'd as done by us? but the truth is, this *us* is not in the Text, it is not *to redeem us,* but *to redeem them that were under the Law,* that is, *the Jews,* who were in *bondage* under the *Moſaical Law,* from which Chriſt redeemed them by abrogating that Law, and introducing a better Covenant, *the adoption of Sons:* for in this Epiſtle, nay in this Chapter, the *Law* is called a ſtate of *Servants,* and of an *Heir under Age,* but the Goſpel is the *adoption of Sons,* puts us into ſuch a free and manly ſtate, as that of an Heir at Age, and therefore is called the *Spirit of adoption. Rom.* 8. 15. So that the

the meaning of this Text is this, that God hath now put an end to the dispensation of the Law, which is called *redeeming them that were under the Law*, in a state of servitude and bondage, and hath established a better Covenant in the room of it, which as much excells the Law, as the *adoption of Sons* does the state of Servants, and this God brought to pass *by sending his Son into the World, made of a Woman, made under the Law:* for the understanding of which words we must consider, what influence Christs appearing in the world had on the abrogation of the Law, and that was, that he accomplished all the Types and Figures of the Law in his own Person, and when all these Types were fulfilled, they grew out of date: so that his *being made under the Law* most probably signifies, his being made such a Person, as should exactly answer all the Types and Figures of the Law, and so put an end to it, as of no further use: Thus the Temple was Gods House, wherein he dwelt, but now the *Shecinah* or Divine Glory rested on Christ, and the fulness of the Godhead dwelt in him bodily, so that now there was no longer any need of a material

material Temple, as a pledge of Gods peculiar presence among them; the Priests and Sacrifices of the Law were Types of Christ, and when that great high Priest came, and offered that perfect Sacrifice of himself, all legal Priests and Sacrifices were of no use: Thus by his being made under the Law, and accomplishing all the Types and Figures of it, he put an end to all those beggarly Rudiments, and delivered the Jews from the bondage of the Law; for though the Gentiles too are redeemed by Christ, yet they were not redeemed from the Law of *Moses*, under which they never were.

Several other places he alledges to the same purpose, but I have either already considered them, or shall do in what follows; but what I have now discoursed, is enough to satisfie any impartial Inquirer, how vain and precarious this Principle is, which too many make the very Foundation of their Faith, that *Christ as Mediator fulfilled all Righteousness in their stead, whose Mediator he was.*

And now had I no other design than to expose the mistakes of other men, I should need add no more, till I saw this

this answered; but I have a greater and better design, *viz.* to explain and confirm the true notions of Religion in opposition to such mistakes, and therefore having shewed you, that there is no foundation in Reason or Scripture to fancy such an Union between Christ and Believers (whether we consider it as a *Conjugal Relation*, or *Legal Union*, as he is our Surety or Mediator) as should entitle Believers to the *Personal Righteousness* of Christ, lest any man should suspect, that the design of all this is to *lessen the Grace of God*, or *to disparage the Merits* and *Righteousness of Christ*, (which God forbid any Christian should be guilty of) I shall *secondly* examine what influence the *Sacrifice of Christs death*, and the *Righteousness of his life* have upon our acceptance with God: and all that I can find in Scripture about this, is, that to this we owe the *Covenant of Grace*: that God being well pleased with the *obedience of Christs life*, and *the Sacrifice of his death*, for his sake entred into a *new Covenant* with Mankind, wherein he promises pardon of sin and eternal life to those who believe and obey the Gospel.

This is very plain with reference to the

the *death of Christ*; hence the *Blood of Christ* is called the *Blood of the Covenant*, *Heb.* 10 29. and Christ is called *the great Shepherd and Bishop of Souls through the blood of the everlasting Covenant*, Heb. 13. 20. and the *blood of Christ* is called *the blood of sprinkling, which speaks better things than the blood of Abel*, *Heb.* 12. 24. which is an allusion to *Moses* his sprinkling the blood of the Sacrifice, whereby he confirmed and ratified the Covenant between God and the Children of *Israel*, *Heb.* 9. 19, 20, 21. *For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the Law*, (when he had declared the terms of this Covenant to them) *he took the blood of Calves and Goats with water, and scarlet wooll, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the Testament, which God hath ordained to you.* Thus the blood of Christ is called *the Blood of sprinkling*, because by his blood God did seal and confirm the *Covenant of Grace*, as the *sprinkling the blood of beasts* did confirm the *Mosaical Covenant*. Hence we are said to be *justified by the blood of Christ*, Rom. 5. 9. that is, by the *Gospel Covenant*,

which was confirmed and ratified with his blood; and Christ is called a *Propitiation through faith in his blood*, that is, by a belief of his Gospel, *Rom.* 3. 25. Hence it is also, that the Scripture uses these phrases promiscuously, to be *justified by faith*, and to be *justified by the Faith of Christ*, and *to be justified by Christ*, and to be justified *through Faith in his Blood*, and to be *justified* and *saved by Grace*, nay by *believing that Christ is the Son of God*, *Joh.* 20. 31. and *that God raised him from the dead*, *Rom.* 10. 3. All which signifie the same thing, that we are justified by believing and obeying the Gospel of Christ: for Faith or Faith in Christ, signifies such a firm and stedfast belief of the Gospel, as brings forth all the fruits of obedience; and the *Grace of God* is the Gospel of Christ, expressly so called in *Tit.* 2. 11. as being the effect of the free grace and goodness of God to Mankind; and Faith in the Blood of Christ is a belief of the Gospel, which was confirmed by his death; and believing that *Christ is the Son of God*, that is, that Messias and Prophet, whom God sent into the World to reveal his will to us, includes

cludes a general belief of the Gospel, which he preached; and *believing that God raised him from the dead* doth the same, because his Resurrection from the dead was the last and great confirmation, which God gave to the truth of his Gospel and Religion. And hence it is also, that the Apostles attribute such things to the Blood of Christ as are the proper and immediate effects of the *Gospel-Covenant*, because they consider the Blood of Christ as the *Blood of the Covenant*, and therefore all the blessings of the Gospel are owing to the Blood of Christ, because the *Gospel Covenant* it self was procured and confirmed by the Blood of Christ. Thus the *Gentiles who were sometime afar off*, are said *to be made nigh by the Blood of Christ*, and the Gentiles and Jews were *reconciled unto God in one body by the Cross*, *Eph.* 2. 14, 15, 16. That is, the Gentiles were received into the fellowship of Gods Church, and the Jews and Gentiles united in *one Body*, or Society; now this *Union* of *Jews* and *Gentiles* is owing to the Gospel, which takes away all marks of distinction and separation, and gives them both an equal right to the blessings of the new

Covenant. The *Mosaical* Covenant did belong only to the Children of *Israel*; but this new Covenant belongs to all Mankind, to Gentiles as well as Jews, *there* is now no distinction of persons, *neither Jew nor Greek, Barbarian, Scythian, Bond nor Free, but Christ is all and in all:* That is, there is no respect of persons or Nations under the Gospel, no man is ever the more or less acceptable to God, because he is a Jew or a Greek, but the only thing of any value now is Faith in Christ, or a belief of the Gospel, which is indifferently offered to all. Now this is attributed to the *Blood of Christ*, and to his death upon the Cross, because thereby Christ put an end to the *Mosaical* Covenant, and sealed this new Covenant of Grace with Mankind, as the Apostle explains himself in the following Verses, 17, 18, &c. that Christ *having abolished the Law of Commandments* by his death, *he came and preached peace* (that is, the Gospel of Peace) *to them who were afar off* (to the Gentile World) *and to them who were nigh* (to the Jews, who were Gods peculiar people) that is, he abrogated the *Mosaical Law*, *that Law of Commandments contained*

contained in Ordinances, which was peculiar to the Jews, and ſeparated them from the reſt of the World; and he broke down the *middle Wall of Partition*, which kept the *uncircumciſed Gentiles, though Proſelytes*, at a diſtance from God, as confining their worſhip to the outward Court of the Temple, which the Apoſtle ſeems to refer to in that phraſe, *them that were afar off*; and now by the Goſpel he admits the Gentiles to as near an approach to God, as the Jews; as he adds, *for through him, we both have an acceſs by one ſpirit to the Father*, *Ver.* 18.

Thus the Jews are ſaid *to be redeemed from the Curſe of the Law* by the accurſed Death of Chriſt upon the Croſs, *Gal.* 3. 13. Becauſe the Death of Chriſt put an end to that legal diſpenſation, and ſealed a new and better Covenant between God and Man: and the Gentiles *were redeemed from their vain Converſation received by tradition from their Fathers*, that is, from thoſe idolatrous and impure practices they were guilty of, *not with corruptible things, as ſilver and gold, but with the precious blood of Chriſt, as of a Lamb without blemiſh and without ſpot.* 1. *Pet.*

1. 18, 19. Now the Gentiles were delivered from Idolatry by the preaching of the Gospel, which is called their being redeemed by the blood of Christ, because we owe this unspeakable blessing to his Death, *who having abolished in his flesh* (by his Death) *the enmity, even the Law of Commandments, &c. came and preached peace to you, which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.*

Now as the Death of Christ upon the Cross, and his Ascension into Heaven, and presenting his blood to God in that *true holy place*, did answer to the first sprinkling of the blood under the Law, which confirmed the *Mosaical* Covenant, as the Apostle discourses in *Hebr.* 9. So his continual Intercession for us in vertue of his blood once shed, and once offered to God, answers to those frequent expiations by Sacrifice under the Law, especially to that general Sacrifice on the great day of expiation, when the High Priest entred into the holy of holies with the the blood of Beasts.

The reason, why the legal Sacrifices were so often repeated, was, because they were imperfect and typical,

but

but a ſhadow of good things to come, and ſo could not take away ſin; but Chriſt *by one offering hath perfected for ever them that are ſanctified. Hebr.* 10. 14. He hath made a perfect expiation for our ſins by dying once, and hath ſealed the promiſes of pardon and forgiveneſs to them who are ſanctified, and *where remiſſion is, there is no more offering for ſin*, *Ver.* 18 Such a Sacrifice as once for all Seals the Covenant of Pardon and Forgiveneſs, makes all other Offerings and Sacrifices needleſs; and then the High Prieſt, who entred into the Holy of Holies with the blood of the Sacrifice, did continue there to intercede for the people, but came out of that holy place, and could not return thither again without a new Sacrifice; *but this man after he had offered one Sacrifice, for ever ſat down at the right hand of God. Hebr.* 10. 12. and becauſe *he continueth for ever, he hath an unchangeable Prieſthood, wherefore he is able alſo to ſave them to the uttermoſt, that come unto God by him, ſeeing he ever liveth to make Interceſſion for them. Hebr.* 7. 24, 25. So that Chriſt by his Death expiated our ſins, and confirmed an everlaſting Covenant,

and being ascended up into Heaven he there appears in the presence of God for us, and perpetually intercedes in vertue of his blood once offered, which is of infinite more value than the repeated Sacrifices of the Law: he procures the pardon of our sins by his Death, and dispenses this pardon to us by his Intercession; he sealed that Covenant of Grace by his blood, and intercedes for us in vertue of his blood, but still according to the terms and conditions of that Covenant, and this is all we must expect from him as our Mediator.

From what I have now discourst, it appears, how injurious those men are to the *blood of Christ* (how much soever they pretend to magnifie it) who attribute no more to it than a *non-imputation of sin*, * that *by his Death Christ bearing and undergoing the punishment that was due to us, paying the ransom that was due for us, delivered us from this condition, (the wrath and Curse and whole displeasure of God) and thus by the Death of Christ all cause of quarrel and rejection is taken away, but then this will not compleat our acceptation, the old quarrel may be laid aside, and*

* Dr. *Owen's Communion*, p. 193.

and yet no new friendſhip begun, we may be not Sinners, and yet not ſo far righteous, as to have a right to the Kingdom of Heaven: So that the blood of Chriſt only makes us innocent, delivers us from guilt and puniſhment, but (if we will take the Doctors word for it) it can give us no title to glory, this is owing to the *imputation of Chriſts Righteouſneſs to us, to the obedience of his life:* but you ſee, the Scripture gives a quite different account of it, we are ſaid to be *juſtified and redeemed by the blood of Chriſt*, nay *we have boldneſs to enter into the holieſt by the blood of Jeſus. Hebr.* 10. 19. which is an alluſion to the High Prieſts entring into the Holy of Holies (which was a Type of Heaven) with the blood of the Sacrifice; thus by the blood of Chriſt we have admiſſion into Heaven it ſelf, though the Dr. ſays, that the blood of Chriſt makes us Innocent, but cannot give us a right to the Kingdom of Heaven.

The Scripture takes no notice of their artificial method, that the guilt of ſin is taken away by the Death of Chriſt, and that we are made righteous by his Righteouſneſs; but the blood of Chriſt is ſaid to juſtifie us, and to

give

give us admission into the holiest of all, into Heaven it self, nay we are made righteous by the Death of Christ too. 2 *Cor.* 5. 21. *For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the Righteousness of God by him:* that is, though Christ was a very holy Person, yet he died as a Sacrifice for our sins, *the just for the unjust, that we might be reconciled to God:* So that our Righteousness as well as innocence is owing to the Death of Christ, to that Sacrifice he offered for our sins: his blood had a great vertue and efficacy in it to make us righteous, *to purge our Consciences from dead works, that we might serve the living God,* and our Righteousness and acceptance with God is wholly owing to that Covenant, which he purchast and sealed with his blood.

But though the pardon of our sins, and our justification be attributed to the blood of Christ, yet I could never perswade my self, that this wholly excludes the perfect obedience and Righteousness of his life: for the Apostle tells us, that we are *accepted in the beloved. Eph.* 1. 6. So that whatever rendred Christ *beloved of God,* did contribute

bute something to our acceptance; for because he was beloved we are accepted for his sake, and I think no man will deny, that God was very highly pleased with the perfect obedience of our Saviours life.

We know how many blessings God bestowed upon the Children of *Israel* for the sake of their Fathers, *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, who were great Examples of Faith and Obedience, which made them very dear to God; and there is no doubt, but God was more pleased with the obedience of Christ, than with the Faith of *Abraham*, and therefore we ought not to think that we receive no benefit by the Righteousness of Christ, when *Abrahams* posterity was so blessed for his sake: but then the Righteousness of Christs life and the Sacrifice of his death do not serve two such different ends, as these men fancy, (that the death of Christ removes the guilt of sin, and his Righteousness is imputed to us to make us righteous), but they both serve the same end to establish and confirm the Gospel-Covenant: God was so well pleased with what Christ did and suffered, with the obedience of his life

and

and death, that for his sake he entred into a *Covenant of Grace* with Mankind; as *Abrahams* Faith was not *imputed* to his posterity, as their act, but *for Abrahams sake God entred into Covenant with them, and chose them for his peculiar people.* The Obedience and Righteousness of Christs life was one thing, which made his Sacrifice so meritorious, which was *the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot.*

And this is the most that can be made of *Rom.* 5. 18, 19. *Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to Condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men to justification of life: for as by one mans disobedience many were made Sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous:* there is no necessity indeed of expounding this ὑπακοὴ *obedience*, of the *Righteousness of Christs life*, or his *active obedience*, for it may very well signifie no more than *the obedience of his Death*, notwithstanding the Doctors distinction, *that doing is one thing, and suffering is another*, for the Apostle tells us, that *he became obedient unto death*, θανάτου *Phil.*

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2. 8. and his offering himself in Sacrifice is called *doing the will of God*, *Hebr.* 10. 9, 10. and whether this be *properly* said or not, I will leave the Doctor to dispute it with the Apostle; it is plain, that in this Chapter, there is no express mention made of any other act of Obedience and Righteousness, whereby we are reconciled to God, but only his dying for us, in *Ver.* 8. The Apostle tells us, *that Christ died for us, while we were Sinners*, in *Ver.* 9. *that we are justified by his blood*, in the 10. *that we are reconciled to God by the Death of his Son*, which makes it more than probable, that by his Righteousness and obedience here, the Apostle understands his Death and Sufferings, because this was the subject of his discourse: but yet these expressions *his Righteousness* and *Obedience* seem to take in the whole compass of his obedience in doing and suffering the will of God: and the meaning of the words is this, that as God was so highly displeased with *Adams* Sin, that he entailed a great many evils and miseries, and death it self upon his Posterity for his sake, so God was so well pleased with the Righteousness and Obedience of Christs

Life

Life and Death, that he bestows the rewards of Righteousness on those who according to the strictness and rigour of the Law are not Righteous, that for Christ's sake he hath made a new Covenant of Grace, which pardons our past sins and follies, and rewards a sincere though imperfect obedience; for δικαιοι κατασταθησονται, *shall be made righteous*, is the same with δικαιωθησονται, shall be justified, that is, treated like righteous persons: so that the Righteousness of Christ is not the *formal cause* of our justification, that very Righteousness whereby we are righteous, but the Righteousness of his Life and Death is the meritorious cause of that Covenant, whereby we are declared righteous, and rewarded as righteous persons; for the Apostle tells us in *Ver.* 17. who those are who are thus justified by Christ, and shall Reign with him in Life, not those who are righteous by the imputation of Christs Righteousness to them, but those *who have received the abundance of Grace, and the gift of Righteousness*, that is, who by the Gospel of Christ, which is the *Grace* and the *abundant Grace* of God, are made Holy and Righteous,

as

as God is; which *Righteousness* is called a *gift*, because it is not owing solely to humane endeavours, but is wrought in us by supernatural means, by those powerful arguments and motives, and divine assistances, which God in infinite love and goodness has afforded the World by Jesus Christ.

This gives a fair account how we may be said *to be made righteous by the Righteousness of Christ*, not that his actual obedience is reckoned as done by us (which is impossible) but because we are made righteous both in a proper and forensick sense by the *Gospel-Covenant*, which is wholly owing to the Grace of God, and to the merits and Righteousness of Christ: the great arguments and motives, and powerful assistances of the Gospel form our minds to the love and practice of Holiness, and so make us inherently righteous, and the *Grace of the Gospel* accepts and rewards that sincere and Evangelical obedience, which according to the rigour and severity of the Law could deserve no reward: so that *our Righteousness* is wholly owing to the *Righteousness of Christ*, which may in this sense be said to be *imputed to us* (though

(though that phraſe never occurs in Scripture) becauſe without this Covenant of Grace, which is founded on the *Righteouſneſs of Chriſt*, the beſt man living could lay no claim to Righteouſneſs or future glory.

So that the *Righteouſneſs of Chriſt* is our Righteouſneſs, when we ſpeak of the foundation of the Covenant, by which we are accepted, but if we ſpeak of the terms of the Covenant, then we muſt have a righteouſneſs of our own, for the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt will not ſerve the turn: Chriſts Righteouſneſs and our own are both neceſſary to our Salvation, the firſt as the foundation of the Covenant, the other as the condition of it.

The ſum of this Section is this, that there is no foundation in reaſon or Scripture, to imagine any ſuch Union betwixt Chriſt and Believers, as ſhould intitle them *to all the perſonal Righteouſneſs of Chriſt*, as much as if it had been performed by themſelves; but the vertue of Chriſts Obedience and Sufferings, ſo far as it concerns our juſtification, is contained in the Goſpel-Covenant: he is the Mediator of the Covenant, and his blood is the blood

of

of the Covenant, and we must expect no other advantage from what Christ hath done and suffer'd, but to be saved according to the gracious terms and conditions of the Gospel.

SECT. IV.

That these men place our Union to Christ before holiness of life.

I Have now explained to you the nature of our Union to the *Person of Christ*, as these men represent it, whereby (they say) we are entitled to all his *Excellencies, Graces, Righteousness, Preciousness, &c.* and made it appear, that there is no foundation for such a notion, either in Scripture or reason; but before I dismiss this, it will be convenient to take notice of the great evil and mischief of this opinion, which may satisfie any considering man (though there were no other evidence of it) how false it is; and I shall observe two things to this purpose: First, That according to this

notion *men may, nay must be united to Christ, while they continue in their sins*, which according to my understanding overthrows all Religion, and destroys the necessary obligations to an holy life. Secondly, That according to these mens discourses no man can certainly tell how to *get into Christ*, or know whether he *be in Christ or not*.

As for the first, that men may, nay must be united to Christ, while they continue in their sins, it is easie to produce abundant evidence for the proof of it. * Mr. *Shepherd* tells us expresly, *that obedience does not make us Gods people, or God our God, but he is first our God (which is only by the Covenant of Grace) and hence it is, that he being ours, and we his, we of all others are most bound to obey*: as for the obligation to obedience, we will consider that anon, at present it suffices, that we are Gods people, and that by vertue of the Covenant of Grace, before we obey him: the same Author * tells us, *that we are not united to Christ our life by obedience, as* Adam *was to God by it, but by Faith* (that is by such a Faith of which Obedience is no part, otherwise

* *Sound Believer. p.* 321.

* *P.*318.

otherwise he opposes a part to the whole, and so the same thing to it self) *and therefore as all actions in living things comes from Union, so all our acts of obedience are to come by Faith, from the Spirit on Christs part, and from Faith on our part, which make the Union*: the meaning of which is this, that we must first be united to Christ by this Faith (of which more anon) before we can do any thing, that is good; before this Union *the best actions we can do, are sins*, which is a plain demonstration of the truth of this charge, because according to this principle we can do nothing but sin, before we are united to Christ: hence these men constantly place *our justification before our sanctification*, that we are first accounted holy by God before we are made holy, now our justification follows our Union to Christ, and our sanctification follows our justification, and therefore we must first be united to Christ, so as to have a title to all the Promises of the Gospel, to Justification and Eternal Life, before we are sanctified, that is, before we are made Holy: hence we are told, *that* * *Holiness is a remote end of vocation, but the next end is to*

* P. 212.

come to Christ: and the same Author makes a speech for Christ to a Sinner (so gracious a speech, that among all the invitations of Christ in the Gospel, we find nothing like it) *though thou hast resisted my Spirit, refused my Grace, wearied me with thy iniquities, yet come unto me, and this will make me amends, I require nothing of thee else but to come; for Gods call is out of free Grace, and therefore he calls for no more, than only to come up and possess the Lords fulness.*

But not to insist upon some particular sayings, let us consider the whole progress of the Soul (as they represent it) to a closure with Christ, the several steps and degrees whereby men are brought at last to *an Union with the Lord Jesus*, and they are *Conviction*, *Compunction*, *Humiliation*, and *Faith*, which is the *uniting Grace*; now if there be nothing of forsaking sin included in all this, then men must be united to Christ before they forsake their sins: it were easie to produce the concurrent judgments of many Authors, for what I shall now say, but that would be too tedious, and therefore I shall confine my self to Mr. *Shephards Sound Believer*,

Believer, as *Orthodox* a Book as ever was writ, and which to this day is in too many peoples hands.

Now * *Conviction of ſin* (according to this Author) *is a great ſenſe of the evil of ſin, and the evil after ſin, of its abominable and accurſed nature, and thoſe juſt judgments which follow ſin, that the Sinner muſt die, and that eternally for ſin, if it remain in this ſtate it is now in:* and no man can deny, but that this is, as it ought to be; men muſt be awakened into a ſerious conſideration of the evil which they have done, and of the puniſhment which they have deſerved, before they will reform their lives; reform? nay now you are out, this is not the *end of Conviction to reform ſin*, (*that is a legal way*) but *compunction is the end of Conviction:* well then, *what is this Compunction?* why compunction is firſt a great fear of being damned, *when a man is thus convinced of ſin, he ſees Death, wrath, Eternity, near unto him, and hence hath no hope to eſcape it, as now he is, and therefore does fear*; next to this ſucceeds *a great ſorrow and mourning for ſin, the Lord having ſmitten the Soul, or ſhot the arrows of fear into*

* *Sound Believer*, p. 68.

the Soul, it therefore grows exceeding ſad and heavy; and that, which perfects this *compunction*, is a *ſeparation from ſin*; this is ſomething like, if they mean as they ſpeak; but if you would not miſtake them, *by a ſeparation from ſin*, you muſt not underſtand a leaving and forſaking ſin, but ſuch a *ſeparation from ſin* as is conſiſtent with living in it: for it is nothing elſe, but * *a being willing or rather not unwilling, that the Lord ſhould take it away: the Lord doth not wound the heart to this end, that the Soul ſhould firſt heal it ſelf, before it come to the Phyſician, but that it might ſeek out, or feeling its need be willing and deſirous of a Phyſician, the Lord Jeſus, to come and heal it; it is the great fault of many Chriſtians, that either their wounds and ſorrows are ſo little they deſire not to be healed, or if they do, they labour to heal themſelves firſt, before they come to the Phyſician for it, they will firſt make themſelves holy, and put on their Jewells and then believe in Chriſt*: ſo that all he means by *a ſeparation from ſin*, is to be content, that Chriſt by an irreſiſtible power ſhould take away our ſins; by this ſeparation the Soul is *cut off from the will to ſin, not from all* (no nor from

* P. 86.

P. 85.

P. 82.

from any) *ſin in the will, for that muſt be mortified by a Spirit of Holineſs, after the Soul is implanted into Chriſt.* Now this is down-right non-ſenſe, for he muſt be a very ſubtil man, who can diſtinguiſh between *a will to ſin, and ſin in the will*, and all that can be made of it is this, that this *ſeparation from ſin* is *a willingneſs, or rather a not unwillingneſs*, that Chriſt ſhould take away our ſins againſt our wills; and therefore he does well to tell us, that this *ſeparation from ſin is no part of our ſanctification*, as any man would eaſily have gueſt by his deſcription of it; the whole deſign of *this compunction*, of this *fear*, and *ſorrow*, and *ſeparation from ſin*, is not that we might forſake ſin, but to work *humiliation* in us, which is a third ſtep towards an Union with Chriſt: Now *this* * *humiliation is the work of the ſpirit, whereby the Soul being broken off from ſelf conceit, and ſelf-confidence in any good it hath, or doth, ſubmitteth unto, and lieth under God to be diſpoſed of, as he pleaſes*; this *ſelf confidence, from which the Soul muſt be broke off*, is any hope of pleaſing God by repentance or reformation, or any thing he can do; for when men

* P. 123.

feel this *compunction of ſpirit for their ſins*, the great danger is, leſt they ſhould ſeek eaſe by repenting of their ſins, and reforming their lives; *that as their ſins have provoked God to anger againſt them, ſo now if they can reform and leave thoſe ſins, or if they repent, and be ſorry for them, if now they pray, and hear, and do as others do, they have ſome hopes* (as well they may, if they do all this) *that this will heal their wounds, and pacifie the Lord towards them, when they ſee there is no peace in a ſinful courſe, they will try if there be any to be found in a good courſe*; this indeed every man naturally would have thought to have been a very good way, but it is a dangerous miſtake, for

P. 125. *while it is thus with the Soul, he is uncapable of Chriſt, for he that truſts to other things to ſave him, or makes himſelf his own Saviour, or reſts in his duties without a Saviour* (that is according to this Author, all thoſe who repent and reform upon the Convictions of their Conſciences) *he can never have Chriſt to ſave him:* So that true *humiliation is this, when the Lord Chriſt hath made the Soul feel, not only its inability to help it ſelf, but alſo its own unworthineſs,*

worthineſs, that the Lord ſhould help it, that ſo it may lye down under God to be diſpoſed of, as he pleaſes, that is to be contented to be ſaved or damned, as ſhall beſt pleaſe God; and when the Soul is brought to this paſs, then *it is vas Capax, a Veſſel capable (though unworthy) of Grace, and now they are made thus hollow and empty by compunction and humiliation, they are capable of receiving and holding Chriſt, as a hollow and empty Veſſel is of receiving and holding any thing, that is put into it*: this is a new notion of our Union to Chriſt, that it is a receiving Chriſt into us, as a hollow Veſſel receives any liquor, that is poured into it; however this is a very Philoſophical account of the nature of *humiliation*, that it is to bring a man to ſuch a thorough ſenſe of his inability to pleaſe God, that he ſhall never dare to be ſo prophane as to attempt it, but muſt leave repentance and reformation of life *to carnal and Chriſtleſs men*; and then to make him ſo ſenſible of his own unworthineſs, and how juſt it is with God to damn him, that he ſhall contentedly ſubmit himſelf to God to be damned or ſaved, as he pleaſes; and

P. 141.

now

now the Soul being thus *empty and hollow* is fit to receive Christ into it, and being grown careless of its Salvation, and indifferent whether it be saved or damned (for it is impossible thus to submit to God, without being indifferent in some measure which God shall chuse) it is a fit object for mercy: certainly it is a very hard thing to bring any man in his wits to this, and I find by this Author, that God is very hard put to it thus to humble the Soul; * for he is forc'd *to irritate and stir up original corruption, to stir the dunghill,* (a very unfit office for a holy Being) that so men finding themselves sensibly grow worse and worse every day, may despair of growing better, and leave off such vain attempts, *and set down humble under God: nay the Lord loads and tires, and wearies the Soul by its own endeavours, till it can stir no more*; that is, when the Soul labours with all its might to repent and reform, the Spirit of God, which should encourage and assist all such pious endeavours, withdraws it self, *because it knows the Soul would rest therein without Christ*: now I confess, I know not who suffers most by this, the Sinner, who is thus humbled

* *P.* 128.

P. 130.

humbled and broken, or God who thus humbles him; for it muſt needs be as contrary to the holy and merciful Nature of God to uſe ſuch methods of humiliation, as it is to the *proud heart* of man to be thus humbled: Thus you ſee, that *Humiliation* hath nothing to do with repentance and reformation of our lives; for one great end of humiliation is to cure men of ſuch carnal conceits, as to think to pleaſe God by repenting and reforming our ſins, and this is the next immediate diſpoſition towards our receiving Chriſt and cloſing with him.

For now when the Soul is thus humbled, it is time it ſhould go to Chriſt, though the truth is, ſuch Souls are *ſo wounded and humbled now, that they lye dead at Gods feet, and are as unable to believe, as they were to humble themſelves: and therefore now the Lord takes them up in his Arms, that they may lean and reſt upon the boſom of their beloved by Faith.* P. 152. Now the form and eſſence of *Faith*, this *uniting Grace*, conſiſts in this, *that it is the coming of the whole Soul out of it ſelf to Chriſt: Faith does nothing for life, for that is the Law of Works, it only receives him, who hath* P. 173.

done

done all for it, it comes out of all it hath or doth unto Christ for life. The Soul by sin is averted from God, and turns his back upon God, the turning and coming of the Soul (not unto duties of Holiness, for that is obedience properly, but) unto God in Christ again is properly and formally Faith: So to come to Christ, as to drink in of Christs fulness, is believing in Christ.

But then Faith is the coming of the *whole Soul to Christ*, and that is, *when* P. 185. *the eye of the Soul so sees Christ, and the heart so embraceth, and relyeth upon Christ, as that it resteth in Christ, as in its portion and all-sufficient good.* This is the Faith which unites us to Christ, and this Faith you see hath nothing at all to do with obedience *in uniting us to Christ*; but it perfects this Union between Christ and Believers, while they are as ugly, and deformed, and vicious as may be; very unfit persons methinks to become the Members of so holy an Head.

This is enough to convince any considering man, how false this notion is of our Union to Christ, according to which wicked men who live in sin, may be united to Christ: for the Scripture

pture places the *formal nature of our Union to Christ* in a *subjection to his Authority*, and *obedience to his Laws*, as I have already made it appear; and therefore an holy life must not only follow our Union to Christ, as an effect of it, but must at least in order of Nature go before it, because by this we are united to Christ. A visible profession of an holy life is necessary to our admission into the Christian Church, which is the Body of Christ; but though this makes us visible Members of Christs Body, and give us a right to an external Communion, yet we are not real and living Members of Christ, till we sincerely obey him, till our minds are transformed into his Image: our Union to Christ is more or less perfect according to our attainments in true piety and vertue. The first and lowest degree of our Union with Christ is a belief of his Gospel, which in order of Nature must go before obedience to it; but yet it includes a purpose and resolution of obeying it; and in this sense we must be united to Christ, before we can be holy; because this belief of his Gospel is the great Principle of Obedience; as our Saviour

our tells his Disciples, *Abide in me, and I in you, as the branch cannot bring forth fruit of it self, except it abide in the Vine, no more can ye, except you abide in me, Joh.* 15. 4. But then our Union is not perfected without actual obedience; this makes us the true Disciples of Christ, when we are fruitful in good works, as he adds in *Vers.* 8. *Herein is my Father glorified, that you bring forth much fruit, so shall you be my Disciples.* A belief of the Gospel of Christ, and a purpose to live in obedience to it, is all that can be expected from beginners, but this doth not give us an actual title to all the promises of the Gospel, unless we actually obey it: but when in the strength of this Faith we conquer all the temptations of the World and the Flesh, and improve all the opportunities of doing good, this makes us the Disciples of Christ indeed, and Heirs of Glory: Christ receives bad men as soon as they believe his Gospel, and resolve to be good, but their reward is suspended upon the performance of these vows, and this is no reproach to his Holiness; but nothing can be a greater dishonour to our Saviour, nor a greater contradicti-

on

on to his Goſpel, than to affirm, that wicked men, while they continue ſuch, are actually united to Chriſt, and thereby have an actual right to pardon, and righteouſneſs, and eternal life. St. *John* I am ſure, underſtood not this Doctrine, when he told us, *That God is light, and in him is no darkneſs at all: if we ſay we have fellowſhip with him, and walk in darkneſs*, (live in any ſin) *we lye, and do not the truth; but if we walk in the light, as God is in the light, then have we fellowſhip one with another*, 1 Joh. 1. 5, 6, 7.

This Doctrine doth not only take away the neceſſity of holineſs in order to our Union with Chriſt, but deſtroys the neceſſary obligations to holineſs and obedience for the future, and ſo thruſts holineſs quite out of the Chriſtian Religion. Our Union to Chriſt is perfected while we are unholy, and when we are united to Chriſt, there is leſs need of holineſs than before; for now the Merits and ſatisfaction of Chriſts death is imputed to us to remove the guilt of ſin, and to deliver us from the puniſhment of it; and his actual obedience is imputed to us to make us righteous, and to give us an

actual

actual right to Glory: so that if men will obey Christ out of a principle of good nature, and thankfulness to him, they may; but according to this notion there can be no necessity of it, because they are delivered from the wrath of God, and have a right to eternal life without it: And this is a plain demonstration, that these notions are so far from being an essential part of the Christian Religion, that they overthrow all Religion, by leaving it at every mans liberty, whether he will worship and obey God or not: but I have * discourſed this at large already in the examination of Dr. *Owen's* reasons for the necessity of Holiness and Obedience.

* Chap. 3.

SECT. V.

That according to these Principles, there is no certain way of getting into Christ, or of knowing whether we are in Christ or not.

THus I have made good the first charge, that according to this notion

notion of our Union to Christ men may, nay must be united to Christ (if ever they be united) while they continue in sin, and this is a great reproach to the Person and Gospel of our Saviour; the other thing which I charged upon this notion, is a more immediate injury to men, as exposing them to perpetual doubts and jealousies about their Salvation, *viz.* that according to these principles no man can certainly tell how *to get into Christ, or know whether he be in Christ or not*: And if I can make this appear, it will be a sufficient reason for every man to reject it, who hath any care of his Salvation, or any regard to the peace and quiet of his own mind.

First then according to these Principles there is no certain way *to get into Christ*: Suppose a sinner, who hears of those great Priviledges, which are consequent upon our Union to Christ, should inquire what course he should take to be united to Christ, and to have a Right and Interest in all the *Excellencies*, *Preciousness*, *Graces*, and *Righteousness* of the *Lord Jesus*; the method prescribed in order to this is *Conviction*, *Compunction*, *Humiliation*, and *Faith*,

which is the *uniting Grace*; now I observe first, that a man is *passive* in all this, and can contribute nothing to it himself any otherwise, than as he is acted by an irresistible power, and it is a vain thing to give such rules and directions as no man can follow; this only tells us by what methods *God* unites us to Christ; not what we *must do*, but what we must *suffer* in order to this Union. *A Sinner may stir up in himself some natural conviction of sin, some natural fear and sorrow, &c.* and in a sense, of this may *set upon the work of reformation, of leaving his sins, and performing duties*, but all this they tell us is to no purpose; for unless this conviction, and compunction, and humiliation be wrought in us by the irresistible power of the Spirit of God (which no man can possibly tell, whether it be or not) it is not of the right stamp, and will avail us nothing: So that the sinner hath nothing to do but to sit still, and patiently expect till God will do all for him.

But secondly, Suppose a man have this *conviction, compunction*, and *humiliation*, is this a sufficient reason to lay hold on Christ by the hand of Faith? by

by no means; the end of *conviction* is *compunction*, and the end of *compunction* is *humiliation*, and all this carries us no nearer to Christ, *than* * *quietly to lye down before God, that he may do what he will with us,* * *turning the other cheek unto the Lord even smiting of us, acknowledging that if the Lord show mercy, it will be wonderful, if not yet the Lord is Righteous; and therefore we have no reason to quarrel against him for denying special mercy to those to whom he does not owe a bit of bread: and now the Soul is indeed humbled, because it submits to be disposed of as God pleases*; that is to be saved or damned: so that this *conviction*, *compunction*, and *humiliation*, contribute nothing to our Union with Christ, but their whole vertue consists in bringing us to such a temper of mind, as to be content either to *have Christ*, or *to go without him*, as God shall please: * *humiliation makes the Soul in the sense of its own infinite vileness and unworthiness not to quarrel at the Lord, and Devil-like grow fierce and impatient before and against the Lord, in case he should never help it, never pity it, never succour it.* * *And now you shall see, if the Lord intend good, he will by*

* *Sound Believer*, p. 126.

* P. 133.

* P. 137.

* P. 138.

this do thee good, and this is all men get by *humiliation, that if the Lord intend to do them good*, this is the way, in which he will do it, but though they be humbled, they cannot be ſure, whether God intend to do them good or not: and therefore we are told, that
*P.144. * we are as much bound to ſubmit to God, whether he will ſave or damn us, as we are to ſubmit to the diſpoſal of God, as to any *common mercy*: though you muſt *pray for mercy, it muſt be with ſubmiſſion to the good will of the Lord, ſaying the Lords will is good* (whether it be to ſave or damn) *but mine is evil*, though it be to be ſaved, and to have Jeſus Chriſt: nay we are much more bound to ſubmit our ſelves to God, whether he will ſave or damn us, than we are to ſubmit to him in the leſſer concernments of this
*P.145. life: * *For if it be pride to murmur in caſe the Lord deny you ſmaller matters, the offals of this life, doeſt thou not ſee, that it is far greater pride for thee to ſink, and quarrel with him, if he denies thee greater, the things of another life? is he bound to give thee greater, who doth not owe thee the leaſt? the Lord gives you life, bleſſed be his name, but you ask for*

for treasures of Grace and mercy (now God hath given you life, you would feign live for ever, an unpardonable fault this!) *thousands of pounds, Christ himself, and all that he is worth, and the Lord seems to deny you, and now you sink, and grow sullen, may not the Lord now say, was there ever such pride and insolence?* as to be unwilling to be damned for ever; though I dare say this is not the pride which cast the Apostate Angels out of Heaven. So that though *conviction*, and *compunction*, and *humiliation*, be the only way to come to Christ, yet it is such a way, as brings us never the nearer him; when all this is done we are where we were: before we were humbled it was at the Lords good pleasure, whether we should have Christ or not, and so it is still.

What then is to be done further in order to our *closing with Christ by Faith?* for hitherto there is no foundation for our Faith: why *you must not catch at Christ, but stay till God give Christ to you, till God take you up in his arms, that you may lean and rest upon the bosom of your beloved through Faith; you must stay till God give you a parti-*

cular call to come to Christ, and whether that will be ever or never, no
P. 153. man can tell: *many a wounded Sinner will be ſcrambling after Chriſt from ſome general reports of him* (ſuch as his Goſpel makes) *before the day and hour of Gods glorious and gracious call, now for any man to receive Chriſt, or to come to Chriſt before he is called, is preſumption* (I unpardonable preſumption too to attempt impoſſibilities, for no body can come till he is called) *no man ſhould come unleſs firſt called* (and therefore no crime to ſtay away) *as it is in calling to an ordinary office, ſo it is in our calling much more to ſpecial Grace, no man takes this honour to himſelf but he, that is called of God. Hebr.* 5. 4. (it is great preſumption to uſurp the office of a Prieſt, or Prophet, or King, without a lawful deſignation to ſuch an office, and therefore it is much greater preſumption to attempt to be a good man and a good Chriſtian without ſuch a particular call) *for what hath any man to do with Chriſt, to make himſelf a Son of God and Heir of Glory* (to take care to pleaſe God, and to make himſelf happy) *but he, that is called of God?* Well Sinner, wait with patience till thou art called,

called, and so thy work is at an end for this time.

But how shall a poor humbled Sinner know when he is called, that then he may come to Christ? why you must have a care, that you do not mistake the general offers of the Gospel for this special call, for they are not a sufficient foundation for our Faith in comeing to Christ, though they are made to the weary and the heavy laden too: men cannot, men will not come at such a call, and indeed they have no reason to do it. *For Christ is not intended for all*, and therefore though he be offered to all in the Gospel, yet it would be great presumption for every one to lay hold on him: *for Christ doth not immediately offer himself to all men, as a Saviour, whereby they may be encouraged to serve him as a King* (that is he does not promise Salvation and Eternal Life in the Gospel with a design, that every one that will, should take encouragement from these promises to obey and serve him) *but first as a King, commanding them to cast away their Weapons, and stoop under his Scepter, acknowleaging that if ever he save me, I will bless him, if he damn me* Sincere Convert. p. 75.

his name is righteous in ſo dealing with me: the meaning of which is, that every man is invited in the Goſpel to ſubmit himſelf to the mercy of Chriſt, but then Chriſt reſerves a liberty to himſelf to ſave or damn, as he pleaſes; and this is all the encouragement the Goſpel gives us. Theſe are hard terms, and ſuch as ſound more like the arbitrary will of an haughty and imperious Lord, than the conditions of a gracious and merciful Saviour.

Ibidem. P. 85. What then muſt we do now? why the only remedy is to *venture and try, God hath elected but few, and Chriſt hath ſhed his blood for few, and therefore we muſt venture,* (and a hard venture it is, where there is ſuch great odds againſt us, and yet our eternal happineſs depends upon the ſucceſs, too great a ſtake for ſuch a venture!) *as many men among us do now, who hearing of one good living fallen, twenty of them will go and ſeek for it, although they know only one ſhall have it* (though did they know, it were irrevocably determined, who ſhould have it, none of them would ſtir, but wait till the news were brought them; good God what Merchant-Adventurers are poor Sinners,

ners, who after all their seeking for Christ are in such danger of missing him!) *or as the Lepers in* Samaria, *if we stay here we must die, if we go out to the Camp of the* Assyrians *we may live:* which is the resolution of desperate men, as it seems the Gospel condemns us all to be.

No previous disposition can give us any encouragement to come to Christ; *humiliation* cannot do it, after this we must expect a call still, we are but probationers for Christ still, and are in as great danger of missing him, as any one of the twenty Competitors are of missing that living, which only one can have; and which is more wonderful, *assurance it self* cannot do it, * *For if you come to Christ, because you have assurance* (that is, if you come to Christ, because you are sure you are already come) *or because you feel such and such graces, and Heavenly impressions of God's Spirit in you, then you may many a day and year keep at a distance from Christ, and live without Christ:* this is a hard saying, that though we *come* to Christ, we may keep *at a distance* from him, nay though we come, because we are sure, we are come already: it is time

* *Sound Believer, p.* 246.

now

now to give over, and despair of ever being sure, when *assurance it self* is no security.

Nothing then but a *particular call* is a good reason to come to Christ: *when the Spirit of God makes the general call* (which signifies nothing) *particular, when the Soul sees, that the Lord in special means me, singles out me in special to believe: for otherwise the Souls of the elect will not be much moved with the call of God, so long as they think, that the Lord offers no more mercy to me than to any reprobate* (that is no more mercy than what will damn them) *and therefore the Spirit of Christ makes the call particular, I have called thee by name, Isaiah* 43. 1. *He calleth all his Sheep by name, John* 10. 5. *not by their Christian name* (as he well observes, for they cannot be Christians before they come to Christ, and that must be after this call) *but as the Lord from before all Worlds wrote down their names in the Book of Life, and loves them in special, so in vocation* (the first opening of Election) *the Lord makes this call special; and so special as if it were by name: look, saith the Lord Jesus, how I have left thousand thousands in the World, and have*

Ibidem. p. 215.

have had greater cause so to have left thee (this is free Grace indeed) *but behold I am come unto thee, oh come thou unto me.* So that it is impossible for a Sinner to do any thing in order to his Union to Christ; there is no foundation for our Faith in Christ, but this *particular call*, and we must wait patiently for it, and be contented too, if it never come.

And when the Soul hath this *particular call*, suppose it should suspect this *call* for a delusion, what course can it take to satisfie it self, that this is the call of the spirit of God, and not the cheat and imposture of an enthusiastick fancy? truly none that I know of; if this calling by name will not satisfie it, there is no other way but to call for the Book of Election, and see whether its name be enrolled there: the best of it is, that all that are called must come, and therefore they need inquire no further.

But secondly, Though we know not how *to get into Christ*, it would be some comfort to know that *we are in him*, but this is as impossible as the other: as the only foundation of our Faith *in coming to Christ* (according to these

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mens notions) *is this ſpecial and particular call of the Spirit*, ſo the only *infallible aſſurance* any one can have, that *he is in Chriſt*, is *the teſtimony of the Spirit, that Spirit of adoption which teaches us to cry Abba Father*; and yet God does not afford this teſtimony of the Spirit to all, but ſuffers many good Chriſtians *to walk in darkneſs*, and *hides his face* from them, and conceals the evidences of his eternal love, for no other reaſon but *becauſe they are* * *deſirous of it, and would be quiet if they ſhould know it*: this is ſomewhat hard meaſure; but ſuppoſe you have, or think you have this *teſtimony of the Spirit*, how can you be ſure, that it is not a cheat and deluſion, the impoſture of the Devil, or of your own ſelf-flattering imaginations?

* *Sound Believer*, p. 130.

To ſatisfie this ſcruple we are directed to marks and evidences, and thus this *infallible aſſurance* from the teſtimony of the Spirit, muſt in its laſt reſolve be founded upon ſome *moral evidence*; as it is with the *Church of Rome*, who after a great noiſe and cry of *infallibility* are at laſt forc't to reſolve their Faith into ſome motives of *credibility*, or to dance round in an endleſs circle. Well,

Well, but let us consider what are the marks and evidences of our *being in Christ:* and now you must inquire, whether *you have the Spirit of Christ,* and it is just as easie to know this, as whether *you be in Christ:* But are you *true Believers? is your Faith of the right stamp? is it wrought by the Almighty Power of God? or is it such an easie, common, presumptuous, false Faith, as that which is in the generality of men?* and this is as easie to know, as either of the former; for if there be such *a false, presumptuous Faith,* as takes Christ when he does not belong to us, and rests and relies on Christ only for pardon, life, and Salvation, and yet shall never have Christ, how shall we know, whether our Faith be true and genuine? such as will make Christ ours? and the answer to this brings us to that great mark of *sanctification;* you must consider the effects of Faith, *doth it purifie your heart? doth it overcome the World? doth it work by love? if any man be in Christ, he is a new Creature, are you then new Creatures? is the state of your person changed from a Child of wrath to an Heir of Grace?* (which is the thing to be proved) *or is your nature changed?*

Dr. *Jacomb Rom.* 8. p. 65.

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do you not think, ſpeak, act as you did before? do ye walk in newneſs of life? &c. have you crucified the fleſh with its affections and luſts? do you bring forth fruit, as every branch in Chriſt (which is not rejected by him) doth? that is, you muſt prove your juſtification by your ſanctification, your Faith by your Works: It muſt be acknowledged, that theſe are ſome of thoſe marks and Characters, which the Scripture gives of good Chriſtians, by which we may as certainly know what our ſtate is, as the Tree is known by its Fruit; and ſince it is no better, I am heartily glad it is no worſe, that good works and a holy life may at leaſt put in for marks and evidences of a juſtified ſtate: though the truth is, this is a meer complement to holineſs, and as they order the matter, a holy life can no more be the ſign of a juſtified ſtate, than it can juſtifie us.

For firſt, ſince holineſs is not neceſſary to our Union with Chriſt, it can be no neceſſary ſign of it; we are united to Chriſt before we are holy, as appears from what I have already diſcourſed, and therefore an unholy man may be united to Chriſt, and how then

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can holiness be the only sure mark of our Union to Christ? indeed they tell us, that holiness does necessarily follow our Union to Christ, but no man knows how long it may be before it follows, and yet all this while such a Person is united to Christ; at best this gives evidence but to one part of the question, a holy life may be a good evidence that such a man is in Christ, but the want of it is no certain evidence, that a man is not in Christ, and therefore this mark may be rejected by any one, who hath no mind to it.

Nay secondly, According to these mens principles, we cannot tell whether we are holy or not, till we know whether we are in Christ or not; our Union to Christ must be an evidence of our holiness, not our holiness an evidence of our Union to Christ: till we are united to Christ, we can do nothing to please God, the best actions of Christless and unregenerate men are but *splendida peccata*, *glittering impieties*, which may appear so fair and lovely, that they may deceive both other men and themselves for the true fruits of the Spirit, but yet are odious and abominable to God, because *the person* who does

does them, is *out of Christ*: our persons must be first accepted in Christ, and then our services: we cannot judge of holiness by the external performance of any duty, nor by the inward sense of our own minds, but must first know whether we are in Christ, whether our persons be accepted in him, before we can tell whether any thing we do be good and acceptable to God: and this is a plain demonstration, that holiness cannot be an evidence of our Union to Christ, because we must first know our Union to Christ, before we can know that we are holy.

And thirdly, At other times these men make *the work of sanctification in this life* so imperfect, and so like an *unsanctified state*, that it is impossible to distinguish a sanctified and unsanctified man; and upon this account holiness and sanctification must needs be a very sorry evidence of our Union to Christ, when it is so imperfect, that it cannot be known, for that which is an evidence of another thing, ought to be very evident it self.

An unregenerate man is under the *Law of Sin*, under the reigning power of it, and a *regenerate man* (as they describe

ſcribe him) is in a ſtate as like this, *as one Egg is like another*: for *a regenerate* man may be *carnal, ſold under ſin*, that is a Slave and Captive to it; *he may do thoſe things which he allows not, nay thoſe things which he hates*; that is, he may ſin againſt the cleareſt convictions of Conſcience, and ſenſe of duty; he may neglect to do thoſe things which he knows he ought to do, and do thoſe things which he knows he ought not to do; he may *find a Law in his members, that when he would do good evil is preſent with him*; *a Law in his members warring againſt the Law of his mind, which brings him into Captivity to the Law of ſin, that is in his members*: for ſo they tell us, that Saint *Paul* complains of all this *in the Perſon of a regenerate man*, in *Rom. 7.* Now an unregenerate man does the very ſame, and indeed cannot do much worſe; *he ſins againſt his Conſcience, is brought into Captivity to ſin, and is over-power'd by indwelling ſin*; *he finds a great many natural fears and terrours, when he is tempted to ſin, which give ſome check to him, and make him ſin againſt his own will with ſome unwillingneſs and reluctancy*; *he approves the Law of God as juſt and equal, his Conſcience aſſents to it, but there is a ſtrong byaſs upon his*

will, which runs counter to all these holy commands, and makes him a Slave and Captive to his lusts. Now not to dispute at present which of these two the Apostle means in *Rom.* 7. I think it is hard to assign any difference between them, the *regenerate man* according to this description is full as bad as the *unregenerate man*, or if there be any difference, the *regenerate man* is the worse of the two, *because in the regenerate man the Spirit is led into Captivity, but in the unregenerate man only natural Conscience, which is a much weaker principle, and so is capable of a better excuse, is led into Captivity*; but which of these two it is no man can tell, and therefore a regenerate man hath great reason to fear, that he may be unregenerate, and an unregenerate man hath as much reason to hope that he may be regenerate: and what becomes then of this evidence of sanctification to prove our Union to Christ, when sanctification it self cannot be distinguisht from an unsanctified State: * Dr. *Jacomb* in his Discourse of the Law of Sin, attempts to assign the difference *between the Law of sin as it is in the regenerate, and as it is in the unregenerate*; and hath given us

* *Rom.* 8. *p.* 182.

us such a Description of an unregenerate State, that I think there is scarce such an unregenerate man in the World; and yet if we must judge what a regenerate man is by inverting the Character of the unregenerate, he is by odds much the worse man.

As first, *When the whole bent and tendency of the heart is towards sin, when the propensities of the Soul thereto are entire and unmixt, there it is the Law of sin, and the Law of sin, which is proper to the unregenerate:* but is every one a regenerate man then, who hath some good inclinations and propensities in him? who hath some wouldings and velleities to that which is good? it is to be hoped then as many bad men as there are, there are few unregenerate men in the World.

Secondly, Which he tells us is the *explication* of the former, (as indeed I think it needs some explication) *when all the several faculties of the Soul are altogether on sins side, and wholly take its part, then it is the Law of sin, and that which is proper to the unregenerate: where the understanding gives in its final and positive dictate, that sin is good, represents it as eligible to the will,*

upon this closes with it, embraces it, cleaves to it, the affections (desire, joy, delight) run out upon it, where it is thus the case is determined: Yea without controversie; but where shall we find such a man? it is so far from being true, that there are such unregenerate men, that I believe there never was such a man born: there are too many, who chuse evil though they know it to be evil, for the seeming advantages of profit or pleasure it brings with it; but to chuse evil as believing it to be good, and to rejoice and delight in it as good and eligible for it self, is such an unregenerate State, as the Devil himself never yet arrived at; for though he be a very wicked Spirit, yet he is no Fool, or Sot, as those must be, who mistake evil for good in such plain and palpable instances; the Heathens themselves at this rate were all regenerate men, for their Consciences accused them for doing evil. *Rom.* 2. they knew good to be good, and evil to be evil, though they did not act agreeably to this knowledge: there never was such a man as he describes, when he tells us, * *That sin comes to the Sinner, and says, art thou willing that I should rule? Yes (saith he) with*

* *Ibidem.*

with all my heart, I like thy Commandments, and Government, I am thine, and submit to thee to be at thy dispose, I here swear fealty and allegiance to thee, &c. This *Oath, &c.* might very well have been spared, for there is enough in all Conscience without it: and yet if this be the principal difference between a regenerate and unregenerate man, that the unregenerate man chuses sin as believing it to be good, and the regenerate man chuses sin, though he knows it to be evil, it is plain, that the regenerate man is much the worse, because his sins have the greatest aggravation that any sins are capable of, which the sins of an unregenerate man have not, *viz.* that they are sins against knowledge, and so according to our Saviours reasoning, this regenerate man will be beaten with more stripes; I doubt not but in this description he wrongs the unregenerate man very much, but yet he makes the regenerate man ten times more the Child of wrath than the other.

But then Thirdly, *The Law of sin hath different workings in the people of God than in others*; this working of the Law of sin in the people of God,

let it be what working he will, methinks is an ill thing, and makes ſanctification a very ſorry evidence, but let us hear how it is.

First, *Where ſin is committed induſtriouſly and deſignedly, there it is the Law of ſin, and which is peculiar to the Graceleſs:* ſo that unleſs men be very cunning at the trade of ſin, and lay projects and deſigns of ſinning, they are not under the Law of ſin, as it is peculiar to the Graceleſs; Grace is very conſiſtent with taking all fair opportunities of ſinning, ſo we do not deſign it before hand.

Secondly, *When the temptation eaſily prevails, and there is little or no oppoſition made to ſin, then it is the Law of ſin,* as it works in the unregenerate: this is an argument indeed that a man is a willing ſlave, but when a man is conquered by a temptation, though he make ſome reſiſtance, it is an argument that ſin is his Maſter, which rules and governs, eſpecially if this be often; and ſuch a man ſurely is none of Chriſts Freemen.

And therefore not to fail, Thirdly, *When ſin carries it in ſpight of all oppoſition, then it is the Law of ſin, and the*

power

power of sin: that is, against all external discouragements, all the threatnings of the Law of God, the Scepter of the Gospel, the love and mercy of God, or his wrath and justice, the Death, Sufferings, Agonies, Wounds, Blood of Jesus Christ, the reproof of the Word, Ministers, Christians; his own resolutions, vows, promises, purposes, &c. So that it seems when sin carries it in despight of all external oppositions only, it is the mark of an unregenerate man, but when it carries it both against external and internal oppositions, that is a sign of a regenerate man: for a regenerate man has the same external oppositions to preserve him from sin, that an unregenerate man hath; and besides these he hath the internal oppositions, the checks of his own Conscience, *&c.* which he says the unregenerate man has not.

And fourthly, *When it is sinning, and no sense of sin, no after repentance for it, then it is the Law of sin:* now what bad man is there, who does not at one time or other repent of his sins, and complain of them, and how many are there, that repent of their sins, and make large Confessions of them, and yet return to them again: so that there

are no men, but do at one time or other express some sorrow for their sins (which he calls Repentance) and there are a great many, who pretend thus to be sorry for their sins; who, it is to be feared, are never the better men for it: and yet were there any such, who sin without any sense of it, they would be much better than these regenerate men, who feel the gripings of their Consciences for sin, and yet return to it.

The result is this, That there is no great matter to chuse between the regenerate and the unregenerate man, only (as they order the matter) the regenerate man hath the better name, but is the worse man: that if we come to external evidences, the regenerate man hath all the reason in the World to fear, that he is unregenerate, and the unregenerate man hath some little reason to hope, that he is regenerate; and is not Sanctification an excellent mark now of our Union to Christ, when a regenerate man may be full as bad or worse than the unregenerate? Indeed it is wonderful to consider, how little a matter will serve for an evidence of Grace (after all their talk of Sanctification)

cation) when they come to administer comfort to distressed Consciences?

Obj. saith the Soul, I find sin prevail, and how can I be comforted? (not by the mark of Sanctification sure!) Answ. *I will subdue your iniquities, and cast your sins into the midst of the sea.* Obj. *But the Devil will be busie with me where-ever I go.* Answ. *God hath said it, I will tread down Satan under your feet.* Obj. *But I cannot go to God by prayer to fetch comfort:* (Comfort? what hast thou to do with comfort? get quit of thy sins first, and then it is time enough for comfort) Answ. *Though it be so, yet believe and thou shalt have thy desire:* (but I doubt the Soul that cannot pray, cannot believe neither) Obj. *But I am afraid I shall fall away from God* (afraid of it? thou art fallen away from God already, if sin prevail so much, for sin is the great Apostacy from God) Answ. *None can pluck thee out of Christs hands, neither sin nor the Devil* (but how if they be not in Christs hands yet, sin I doubt may keep them out, and if God cut off barren branches from this spiritual Vine, there is some danger that putrid and rotten branches will not escape) *And God hath*

Shepherds Saints Jewel, pag. 192.

hath said, I have made an everlasting Covenant with thee, that I will not turn away from thee to do thee good. Obj. *This is good news, had I a right to the promise, but alas! I cannot believe, and take a naked promise.* Answ. *Dost thou desire to believe and to have Christ? and say thus, If it were possible Christ and Heaven should be separated, I would rather desire Christ without Heaven, than Heaven without Christ.* Obj. *But this is a hard matter, and I cannot say I truly desire Christ on such terms as I should* (this saying is the best sign of Grace I have met with yet; for it is an Argument he is an honest man, who will not contradict the natural sense of his mind, and say he can do that, which is impossible to be done: for it is a very odd proposal in order to comfort a poor Soul, that he must be willing to be damned with Christ, before he must take comfort in hopes of being saved by him) Answ. *But is it the grief of thy heart, that thou canst not deny thy self? and desirest thou rather than be separated from Christ, to close with Christ upon any terms?* Obj. *Alas! I am so far from being grieved as I ought, that I rather find a heart that will not grieve*

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and mourn for sin, &c. (certainly they are at cross purposes, their Objections and Answers do so ill agree; what is matter for mourning for sin, man? Canst thou desire to have Christ upon any terms, though it be to be damned with him?) Answ. *Hast thou any will to it? mark the place, and whosoever will, let him take of the waters of life freely; not that every one that will have Christ, shall have him, but art thou willing to part with thy sins? But the poor soul saith again, I fear I shall never do this: But art thou willing that Christ should make thee willing* (against thy will) *and pitch thee upon a promise, and hold thee there:* (for shame, poor Soul, refuse not this) *then comfort thy self, thou hast a right to Gods promises.* Thus this evidence of Sanctification is dwindled away into *a desire to be willing*, nay *into a desire to be made willing*; and he is a strange man, who cannot go so far.

But then fourthly I observe further, That when they have a mind to take down the confidence of men, who are apt to presume too soon, that their condition is good, they do so magnifie the attainments of Hypocrites, who shall never

never go to Heaven, that it is impoſſible for any ſanctified man to do more than an Hypocrite may do; ſo that notwithſtanding any evidences of Sanctification, which he can diſcover in himſelf, for ought he or any body elſe can tell he may be a Hypocrite ſtill; which quite ſpoils the evidence of Sanctification, becauſe we cannot diſtinguiſh a ſanctified man from a Hypocrite.

Thus for Example, *One may plead, I have left my ſins I once lived in, and am now no Drunkard, no Swearer, no Lyar: I anſwer, Thou mayſt be waſhed from the mire (the pollution of the World) and yet be a Swine in Gods account* (which he proves from 2 *Pet.* 2. 20. where the Apoſtle tells them, *That if they have eſcaped the pollutions of the World through the knowledge of Chriſt, and are again intangled therein, and overcome* (if they return to their old vices) *then their latter end is worſe than the beginning*, which is point-blank contrary to what he affirms, That thoſe who have eſcaped theſe pollutions, and are not yet intangled again in them, may notwithſtanding that be Swine in Gods account, for ſo he adds, *Thou mayſt live*

Shepherds ſincere Convert, p. 94. &c.

a blameless, innocent, honest, smooth life, and yet be a miserable Creature. But I pray (says such a man) *and that often, so thou mayst, and yet never be saved:* Isa. 1. 11. *To what purpose is the multitude of your Sacrifices?* To great purpose sure, when they are offered by men of *blameless, innocent, honest, smooth lives*, the want of which made those Sacrifices abominable to God.

But I fast sometimes; so did the Scribes and Pharisees twice a week, but it was to devour Widows houses, which was not the fast of an *honest innocent man: but I hear the Word of God, and like the best Preachers; So did the stony ground, who heared the Word with joy, and for a season believed*; and this had been well, and a good sign of Grace, if it had continued. *I read the Scripture often; so did the Pharisees, who were so perfect in the Bible, that Christ needed but say, It hath been said of old times, for they knew the Text without intimation:* Men of prodigious memories certainly, better than any Concordance; but though Knaves may read the Scripture, and be never the better for it, yet good men may read it to good purpose, and therefore I hope

hope reading the Scripture is no argument, that a man is a Hypocrite, because the Phariſees were.

But I am grieved and am ſorrowful, and repent of my ſins; ſo did Judas; but he hanged himſelf, and that indeed is no repentance to life: *But I love good men and their company; ſo did the fooliſh Virgins*; but they ſlept, and ſuffered their lamps to go out, which I hope all that love good men do not: *But God hath given me much knowledge; That thou mayſt have, and never be ſaved:* yes, and twenty good things more, but if a blameleſs honeſt man have the keeping of this knowledge, it is never the worſe for him. *But I keep the Lords day ſtrictly; ſo did the Jews, whom yet Chriſt condemned:* Had he been as well acquainted with the Scriptures as the Phariſees were, he would not have ſaid, that the Jews kept the *Lords day*; however this is one good thing, which doth well in the company of more, though it will not juſtifie a man, when it is alone. *But I have many good deſires and endeavours to get to Heaven; theſe thou and thouſands may have, and miſs of Heaven:* and yet when he was in a more gentle humour, he told the

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poor doubting Soul, that desire, nay that a desire only to desire at two or three removes, was enough.

But many do duties without life or zeal, I am zealous; so was Jehu (to destroy the Worship of *Baal*, and to retain *Jeroboams* Calves) *and so was* Paul *while a Pharisee* (in persecuting the Christian Church, and therefore an universal, and religious, and well-governed zeal; for God can be no sign of Grace.) *But I am constant and persevere in godly courses; so did the young man, all these things have I kept from my youth* (only he left Christ for the sake of his riches, and so did not persevere.) *But some men are conscious to themselves of their own hypocrisie, but I do all with a good heart for God: So thou mayst think of thy self, and be deceived*; (and if this be an objection, let a man have what marks he will, the objection will still be good, and so all evidences signifie nothing; for after all it may be objected, That a man may be deceived in it, and think he hath these marks, when he hath them not.) *There is a way that seemeth right to a man, but the end thereof is death, thou mayst live so as to deceive*

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thy self and others, and yet prove an Hypocrite: as if because some men may think themselves good, who are in a bad way, no man could ever be sure, that he is in the right; and thus farewel all evidences.

But after all this, it would be worth the while to know how to distinguish a regenerate from an unregenerate man; and that he tells us may be done thus, *An unregenerate man, let him go never so far, do never so much, yet he lives in some one sin or other*; this now is very strange, *What go never so far? and do never so much? and yet live in some one sin or other?* What live a *blameless, innocent, honest, smooth life*, and yet live in some one sin or other? and yet suppose he did, a *regenerate man* may be in *captivity to the law of sin*, and pray what's the difference? but then *an unregenerate man cannot be poor in spirit, and so carried out of all duties to Christ:* That is, if an unregenerate man do good, he is conscious to himself that he doth it, if he have a good heart, he feels a good heart in himself, and in all he doth, and therefore *feels not a want of all good*, which is true poverty of spirit: So that according

ding to this discourse, the surest mark of a regenerate man is either to have no good in himself, or if he have any, to be mistaken and think he hath none, either of which I think is a very odd sign of Grace.

But then *an unregenerate man comes unto Christ, but he never gets into Christ, never takes up his eternal rest and lodging in Jesus Christ only*: I thought *coming* had been *believing*, and that *believing* would have done the business, and if so, God forbid that any man should be damned for want of that other Metaphor *of taking up his eternal rest and lodging in Christ: men in distress of Conscience* (that is, all unregenerate men under such distress) *if they have comfort from Christ they are contented, if they have Salvation from Hell by Christ they are contented* (and I think they have some reason then to be contented) *but Christ himself* (that is, without comfort and without Salvation) *contents them not.* Now to be contented with Christ without comfort and without Salvation, is so far from being the mark of an unregenerate man, that I am not yet satis-

fied, that it is the mark of an unreasonable man.

Now are not these men do you think great friends to sanctification, who make all the parts of sanctification, *the reformation of our lives, an innocent & blameless Conversation, Fasting, Prayer, hearing, reading, conversing with good men, zeal for God, perseverance in well doing, honest and sincere intentions in all we do,* no more than the marks of Hypocrites; and give no better marks of a regenerate man than to be sensible of no good in himself, (and then he must either have none, or be a Fool, though having none is the surest way not to be sensible of it) and to take up his eternal rest in Christ, and to be contented with Christ without Comfort and without Salvation.

And now I shall conclude this Section with a remarkable passage in the P. 167. *Sincere Convert*, whereby it will evidently appear, what these men think of *sanctification*: there we have an account what course some men take to secure their eternal happiness: *that when they find themselves tired and weary of themselves, and hearing that only Christ*

Christ can save them, they go to Christ to remove those sins, which tired and loaded them, that he would enable them to do better than formerly: if they get these sins subdued and removed, and if they find power to do better, then they hope to be saved. (here is the evidence of sanctification) *whereas* (as he adds) *thou maist be damned, and go to the Devil at last, though thou dost escape all the pollutions of the World, and that not from thy self, and thy own strength; but from the knowledge of Jesus Christ, wo to you for ever if you die in this state* (with your sins mortified and subdued by Christ) and the reason is, *because this is to come to Christ to suck juice from him to maintain his own Berries* (his own stock of Graces) *alas! he is but the Ivy, he is no member nor branch in this Tree, and hence he never grows to be one with Christ.* So that holiness and obedience is no evidence of our Union to Christ, though we fetch strength from Christ to do his will; we may only grasp about Christ all this while, as the Ivy doth about the Oak, but never be united to him, and become one with him: so that now we must return where we began, and stick to the *testimony of the*

spirit, without any external evidence, that, is to private Enthuſiaſms, for ſanctification can be no evidence of our Union to Chriſt.

Good God! Into what mazes and Labyrinths do theſe men lead poor diſtreſſed Souls, they can direct them to no certain way of getting into Chriſt, nor how to know whether they are in Chriſt or not: and now we may plainly ſee what friends theſe men are to a holy life: they all agree that holineſs is not antecedently neceſſary to our Union with Chriſt, but they only pretend to make it a neceſſary mark and evidence of our Union, and yet they will not allow it this priviledge neither to be a certain evidence of our Union to Chriſt; it may prove us united to Chriſt, as the Ivy is to the Oak, not as a branch is united to the Vine; and I hope this will juſtifie any mans zeal againſt ſuch opinions, as undermine the very foundations of Chriſtianity.

The Goſpel method of Salvation is very plain and eaſie: thoſe great Miracles our Saviour wrought, and his Reſurrection from the Dead, are the foundation of our Faith, a ſufficient reaſon to believe that he came from God,

God, and declared his will to the World: a publick profession of this Faith in our Baptism makes us the visible members of his body, which is his Church; and a sincere obedience to his Gospel makes a real Union between Christ and us, and entitles us to all the promises of the Gospel: and every man may as certainly know, whether he be thus united to Christ, as he can feel the motions of his own mind, as he can know what he loves, and hates, and chuses, and what the course of his life and actions are, and there is no need of any revelation, of any private testimony of the spirit to assure men of this, no more than there is to assure them of any thing, which is evident to their outward or inward senses.

The *testimony of the Spirit* concerns the *general adoption* of Christians for the Sons of God, not to testifie to any particular man, that he is a good Christian, or in a state of Grace: that is, it is not a *private*, but a *publick testimony* given to the whole Christian Church: that Holy Spirit, which God bestowed upon the Apostles and Primitive Christians, which enabled them to

work miracles, and to ſpeak Languages which they had never learnt, and to Propheſie, was a plain argument to all the World, that God now owned the Chriſtians, not the Jews, for his choſen and elect people, for his Sons and Children: for this was the great diſpute of thoſe days, whether Jews or Chriſtians were the Sons of God, whether God now owned the Jewiſh or the Chriſtian Religion, and the Apoſtles decide this controverſie by the teſtimony of the Spirit; for God could not give a greater teſtimony to the Chriſtian Church than the gift of the Holy Spirit; for it was a plain argument, that he owned them for his Sons, when he beſtowed the Spirit of his Son on them: as the Apoſtle argues. *Gal.* 3. 2. *Received ye the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by the hearing of Faith?* That is, did God beſtow his Spirit on you, while ye were Jews? or upon your Converſion to Chriſtianity? for if God beſtowed his Spirit only on Chriſtians, this is a ſufficient ſeal to the Chriſtian Religion.

This is very plain and intelligible; the teſtimony of the Spirit aſſures us, that all Chriſtians are the Sons of God, and

and Heirs of his Promiſes, and every mans own Conſcience will tell him, whether he be a Chriſtian, that is, whether he heartily believe, and obey the Goſpel of Chriſt, and herein conſiſts our Union to Chriſt, and fellowſhip with him: let us then leave thoſe other dim notions to men, who can believe, what no man can underſtand, who deſpiſe every thing, that can be underſtood, as if it were no better than *carnal reaſon.*

CHAP. V.

Concerning the Love of Christ to Believers.

SECT. I.

I Have now finisht the greatest part of my design, and shall discourse more briefly of what remains. Next to our *Union* with Christ, follows *our Communion* with him; for though Communion and fellowship in the Scripture notion of those words signifie no more, than what we call Union, as * I have already proved, yet in these mens Divinity they are very different: our *Union* to Christ is represented by *our marriage* to him, our *Communion* with him by *consequential, conjugal affections:* the only thing I shall at present take notice of for a Conclusion of all, is that mutual and reciprocal love, which is betwixt Christ and Believers, *Christs love to Believers*, and *the Believers love to Christ.*

* *Ch.* 4. *Sect.* 1. *P.* 186.

First, *Christs love to Believers:* the Scripture doth very justly magnifie the love

love of Christ, as the greateſt example of goodneſs, that was ever known in the World; and the greateſt expreſſion of the love of Chriſt was his *dying for us: he is that good Shepherd who giveth his life for his Sheep. John* 10. 11. and our Saviour himſelf tells us, *greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend:* and therefore when the Apoſtle deſigned to mention the greateſt expreſſion of Chriſts Love, he inſtances in this. *Eph.* 5. 25. *Husbands love your Wives, even as Chriſt alſo loved the Church, and gave himſelf for it:* and when the ſame Apoſtle repreſents the conſtraining power of Chriſts love to captivate our affections, and to engage us to live to him, he argues from his love *in dying for us*, 2 *Cor.* 5. 14, 15. *For the love of Chriſt conſtraineth us, becauſe we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead, and that he died for all, that they which live ſhould not henceforth live unto themſelves, but unto him which died for them, and roſe again*: and the moſt ſurprizing circumſtance of all, which gives a new luſter to the love of Chriſt, is *that he died for us while we were Enemies. Rom.* 5. 6, 7, 8. *For when we were*

yet

yet without strength in due time Christ died for the ungodly, for scarcely for a righteous man will one die, yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die, but God commendeth his love towards us, that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

But though this be the greatest, it is not the only expression of Christs love; herein indeed was the love of Christ perfected that he died for us, but he expresses the same good will in all the methods of his Grace and Providence: for Christ being our *Lord and Master*, the most proper expression of his love to us is in an easie and gentle Government, and a kind and watchful Providence, not in such a fondness of passion, as is sometimes seen among equals, this * I told you was exprest by those metaphors of his being a *Shepherd*, a *Husband*, a *Head*, a *Friend:* and our Saviour assures us, *that his yoke is easie, and his burden light*, that he is a mild and gentle Governour, *meek and lowly in mind:* that he hath declared to us the secrets of Gods Counsel concerning our Salvation with the same freedom and plainness, that a man useth to his friend; *henceforth I call you not servants,*

* Ch. 4. Sect. 1.

vants, for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doth, but I have called you Friends; for all things, that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you: *John* 15. 15. He pities our weakness and infirmities, and is ready to help and succour us; he is now ascended up into Heaven, where he personally intercedes for us, and with his own hand dispenses all those blessings to us, which we want and pray for in his name; *he is a gracious and merciful High Priest, who is touched with a feeling of our infirmities, being in all things tempted like as we are, yet without sin.* *Hebr.* 4. 15.

And now it is no wonder, if he, who died, and who intercedes for us, take pleasure in good men, and dwell with them, as one friend dwells with another. *John* 14. 21. *He that hath my Commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me, and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest my self unto him:* and in *Ver.* 23. *If a man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him:* That is, Christ will in a more peculiar manner be present with such good men,

who

who are careful in all things to obey him; and will give very ſenſible demonſtrations of his preſence with them: not that he will make any new revelations to them, for he hath already revealed the whole mind and will of God in ſuch a plain and familiar manner, that every one may underſtand it, who will but exerciſe the ſame reaſon in it, that he does to underſtand the Laws of his Prince; but yet when a Soul is transformed into the likeneſs and image of Chriſt, it many times feels ſuch ſtrong and vigorous motions to that which is good, and ſuch great and raviſhing delights in all the acts of Religion, as infinitely excel all the pleaſures of ſenſe, and are a plain demonſtration of a more peculiar preſence of God in ſuch a Soul; theſe divine joys are by the Pſalmiſt compared to the Feaſts upon Sacrifices, *Pſalm* 36. 8. *They ſhall be abundantly ſatisfied with the fatneſs of thy Houſe, and thou ſhalt make them drink of the Rivers of thy pleaſures*, that is, they ſhall reliſh a great pleaſure and ſatisfaction in the ſenſe of thy goodneſs, and in paying their juſt praiſes and acknowledgment to thee, as thoſe do, who Feaſt upon the Sacrifice

Sacrifices, which are offered in the Temple: for it is very reasonable to think, that a Soul, which is made one with God by a participation of his nature, should feel such divine impressions from God, as may both quicken its motions, and sweeten its work: there is a secret sympathy between things, which are alike, two unisons will move, when either of them is toucht, and two Souls which are of the same make, and united by a strong and intimate friendship, do many times feel each others passions at a distance, by a secret and unaccountable power of nature; and can we think then, but that a Soul, which heartily loves God, and passionately breaths after a greater likeness to him, and fuller enjoyment of him, must needs sometimes feel such divine touches and impressions as are the effects (if I may so speak) of a mutual love and sympathy of natures: some such thing our Saviour hath promised, and good men experience, not in equal degrees indeed, nor equally at all times, but in proportion to their attainments in true Piety and vertue, and to the present frame and disposition of their own minds.

This

This is a short and true account of the *love of Christ*, which deserves for ever to be admired and adored; and it must needs be a very hearty trouble to all good men to see so great and so generous a love so miserably abused and misrepresented by childish and romantick descriptions: too many there are, who cloath our Saviour with all the passions and follies of mortal men, and think they honour him very much, the more extravagant they make him in his love: It were easie to expatiate in this argument, and to give such a character of the love of Christ, as I believe, these very men will think prophane, when they find it in any Books, but their own; and possibly it might do good service to Religion, and tend much to the honour of our Lord and Master to put them out of conceit with it; but I fear the Reader would think me prophane in doing it, though in their own words, and therefore I shall chuse rather only to take notice of two things, which these men much insist on in their discourses of the love of Christ, and so dismiss them.

First then, the love of Christ is a love to the *Person* of a Believer, without considering

considering any other *qualifications*, than that he is *such an individual Person*; that is, the excellency of Christs love consists in this, that he loves for no reason; now I confess this is a *wonderful love*, but wherein the excellency of it consists, I cannot see; I am sure we account that man a Fool, who loves at this rate; we who are reasonable Creatures, think that we are bound to govern all our actions and the passions of our mind too by reason, and we account it a reproach to a man to act either against reason or without it, to do any thing of which he cannot give a reasonable account; and how that should come to be the perfection of the love of God, which is a reproach to men, is above my apprehension. Indeed were this true, it would undermine the very foundations of Religion; for the great end of Religion is to please God, and to procure his love and favour, but if God and Christ love for no reason, then it is a vain thing for us to think of pleasing God, or procuring his love by any thing, we can do: whether we obey him, or disobey him, it is all one as to this Case; for if he please to love us without any reason,

reason, our sins cannot hinder it, and if it does not please him to love us, our Holiness and Obedience cannot alter him: when our acceptation with God depends wholly upon a Soveraign and unaccountable will, nothing we can do can either hinder or promote it, and therefore all Religion is in vain.

The foundation of this mistake is a Philosophical nicety, that God must act wholly from himself, and therefore must not be moved by any external cause, whereas should he love us because we are holy and obedient to him, or hate us, because we are wicked, his love and hatred would depend upon an external cause, *viz.* the holiness or wickedness of Creatures, which unbecomes an *Independant being* to depend upon any thing else: the sum of which reasoning is this, that because God is the first cause of all things, on whom all other things depend, and he on nothing, therefore he must love and hate his Creatures without any reason but his own unaccountable will: for this is all the inconvenience they can object, that when God loves or hates, rewards or punishes his Creatures, the reason of this difference, he makes between his

his Creatures muſt be fetcht from the perſons themſelves, whom he thus loves or hates; and ſo it muſt of neceſſity be, if he have any reaſon at all; for the reaſon of love or hatred ought to be in the object, not in the perſon, who loves or hates: and yet in propriety of ſpeech God cannot be ſaid to depend on his Creatures or any thing without himſelf for the reaſon of his love or hatred, but his own nature is the reaſon of it: he is infinitely holy, and therefore loves holineſs and hates ſin, and his natural love to holineſs is the reaſon why he loves holy men, and his natural hatred to ſin is the reaſon why he hates wicked men; his own holineſs is the reaſon why he loves holy men, but the holineſs of a Creature is the reaſon why he determines his love to any particular perſon, and if they will call this a depending on Creatures, we muſt acknowledge that God does thus depend on his Creatures in the adminiſtration of his Providence, in the diſtributions of rewards and puniſhments, and he ſhould not be wiſe, and holy, and juſt, and good, if he did not, that is, if he did not put ſuch a difference between things and perſons, as

their natures require. It is a ſtrange notion of an *Independant Being*, that he muſt have no other reaſon for what he does but his own arbitrary will, which is ſo far from being a perfection, that it deſtroys all the other perfections of the divine nature.

Secondly, Theſe men tell us too, that *the love of Chriſt is immutable*, that having once fixt his love upon us though without any reaſon, he can never alter: that *ſin it ſelf cannot ſeparate us from the love of Chriſt; as there was nothing in us, that was the ground of his planting his love on us, ſo there is nothing that ſhall be able to overturn the thoughts of his love, when once they are fixt on us:* (though this is no certain demonſtration, for he who loves for no reaſon may give over loving for none) *if ſin fore-ſeen were not able to hinder him from planting his heart on us, how then ſhall it* (that is ſin committed) *be able to overturn the thoughts of his heart, when once they are fixed on us?* this is a ſtrong and fixed love indeed, which ſin it ſelf cannot alter, but how *wiſe* and *holy* a love it is, let any man judg: herein * Dr. *Owen* tells us *the depth of Chriſts love is to be contemplated,*

* *Com. p.* 158.

templated, that whereas his holy Soul hates every sin, it is a burden, an abomination, a new wound to him, and his poor Spouse, that is, sinful Believers are full of sin, failings, infirmities, he hides all, covers all, bears with all, rather than he will loose them. He adds indeed, *by his power preserving them from such sins, as a remedy is not provided for in the Covenant of grace:* I suppose he means the sin against the Holy Ghost, for there is a remedy provided for all other sins in the Covenant of Grace: and all other sins a Believer it seems may be guilty of, *and Christ will hide all, cover all, rather than lose him:* now this is as down right *Antinomianism*, as ever Dr. *Crisp*, or *Saltmarsh* vented: There have been and are to this day a great many wise and learned men, who contend earnestly for the *perseverance of the Saints*, that those who are once in a *state of Grace*, shall always continue so, but then they found this not on such an immutable love, as sin it self cannot alter, for this is not reconcileable with the holiness of the divine nature, nor with those threatnings in the Scripture against such back-sliders; *when the righteous man turneth away*

from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doth according to all the abominations that a wicked man doth, shall he live? all the righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned; in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die. Ezek. 18. 24. *And if any man turn back my Soul shall have no pleasure in him:* which is a plain demonstration, the truth of which is acknowledged by all sober Writers, that if such men can be supposed to relapse into a sinful state, God also will cease to love them; and therefore they found the *immutability* of Gods love to them, on *their perseverance in doing good*: God loves all good men, but if they cease to be good, he also must cease to love: and herein the *immutability* and unchangeableness of Gods love consists, not that he always loves the *same Person*, but that he always loves for the *same Reason*: for it is no perfection to be so fixt in our kindness, that where we love once, we will always love, whatever reason there may be to alter our affection; for by this means we may love undeserving objects, which is the greatest degeneracy of love: but the

the perfection of love consists in loving deserving objects, and in loving upon honourable reasons, and the immutability of love consists in loving always for the same reason, which is the only foundation of a *vertuous immutability*.

The reason of Christs love to any Person is his Holiness and Obedience: *if any man love me he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. John* 14. 23. and the unchangeableness of his love is seen in this, that he will continue to love, while we continue to obey him: *if ye shall keep my Commandments*, that is, continue to do so, *ye shall abide in my love*, I will continue to love you; *as I have kept my Fathers Commandments, and abide in his love. John* 15. 10.

This is the immutability of the divine nature, that God always acts upon steddy and constant principles, that whatever changes there are in the World, which may occasion very different administrations in his providence, yet he is the same still, and never changes; whereas should God always love the *same Person*, however he changed and alter'd, God must

change and alter too, becauſe though he ſtill loves the ſame Perſon, yet he muſt love for different or contrary reaſons, or for none at all; and that is the much greater change of the two, to alter the reaſon, than the object of love: if God love a good man, becauſe he is good, and continue to love him, when he is wicked, his love is a mutable thing, which can love goodneſs or wickedneſs, which can love for none, or for contrary reaſons; but if God always love true goodneſs, and good men, and never loves any other, whatever change there be in Creatures, God is the ſame ſtill, and unchangeable in his love.

Thus you ſee, while theſe men pretend to admire and magnifie the love of God and Chriſt, they make it a deſpicable and worthleſs thing, ſuch as a wiſe man would be aſhamed of, and ſuch as a good man cannot be guilty of, to love for no reaſon, and to continue to love contrary to reaſon: And as this is a great reproach to God and to our Saviour, ſo is it a great injury to men too; for it muſt of neceſſity make them careleſs of pleaſing God, and ſecure in their ſins, when they are perſwaded

perſwaded that ſin cannot hinder God from loving them, nor alter his love towards them: that if ever he love them, it is for no reaſon but becauſe he will, and when once he is reſolved upon it, the immutability of his nature makes it neceſſary for him to continue to love: that now ſin it ſelf cannot ſeparate us from the love of God: if this were true, the worſt man living would have as much reaſon to be ſecure of Gods love, as the beſt men have; nay, if the depth, and myſtery, and glory of the love of Chriſt conſiſts in loving for no reaſon, or contrary to reaſon, the worſe men are, the fitter objects are they of the love of Chriſt.

SECT. II.

Concerning the Believers love to Christ.

HAving ſhowed you wherein the *Love of Chriſt* conſiſts, I ſhall now conſider, what are thoſe returns of love which we owe to our Lord and Saviour: I take it for granted, that all men who believe that Chriſt came into the World to ſave Sinners, are of the Apoſtles mind, *if any man love not the Lord Jeſus, let him be Anathema Maranatha*; the only diſpute is, how we are to expreſs our love to Chriſt: now love primarily ſignifies the inward affection of the mind, but is made viſible by outward actions: as for the affection of the mind, we muſt conſider, that Chriſt is our Superiour, our Lord and Maſter, and therefore our love to Chriſt ought not to expreſs it ſelf in a fond and familiar paſſion, ſuch as we have for our friends and equals, but in a great reverence and devotion: Superiours muſt be treated with honour and reſpect, which

which requires that we keep our distance; and therefore our love to our Parents and Superiours is called *honour* in the fifth Commandment, *Honour thy Father and thy Mother*, and the same religious affection to God which is sometimes called *love*, is at other times called *fear*, which signifies a *reverential love*, or a love of honour, and reverence, and devotion: which includes a great delight in the thoughts of God, a devout sense of his greatness and Majesty, a great admiration of his Excellencies and perfections, a religious awe and reverence for him, and all those affections of the Soul, which are expressive of love and honour.

As for the external expressions of our love, they are as various as the expressions of honour are; and herein we must have a peculiar regard to the nature and condition of the Person, and that relation we stand in to him; thus Christ being *the only begotten Son of God*, we must have regard to the greatness and excellency of his *Person*, that our returns may bear some proportion to it: Christ having condescended to come into the World in our nature, to suffer

ſuffer and die for us, it becomes us to admire his love and goodneſs, to extol and praiſe him; to celebrate the memorials of his Death and Paſſion in that holy Feaſt, which he hath on purpoſe inſtituted to be a thankful remembrance of our Crucified Lord: ſince he is our Mediator and Advocate, the trueſt expreſſion of our love and honour is to confide and truſt in him, to depend on his intereceſſion for us, to offer up all our Prayers to God in his name, and to expect an anſwer to our Prayers for his ſake: and when we conſider him as our Prophet and Law-giver, we muſt expreſs our love to him in a ſtedfaſt belief of his Goſpel, and in a ſincere and hearty obedience to all his Laws: love to equals, who have no authority over each other, but what love gives them, makes them very flexible and obſequious to each others deſires and requeſts; but our love to Superiours to our Prince or Parents includes obedience in its own nature; and therefore this our Saviour makes the principal tryal of our love to him; *if you love me, keep my Commandments: and he that hath my Commandments and keepeth them,*

them, he it is that loveth me: but he that loveth me not, keepeth not my sayings; you are my friends, if you do whatsoever I command you, Joh. 14. 15. 23, 24. and in *Chap.* 15. *vers* 14. for there cannot be a more proper expression of our love and honour to a Law-giver, than to obey his Laws. And when we consider our Saviour as *our Guide and Example*, the truest expression of our love and honour is *to imitate him, to live as he lived in the World*: For there is nothing more natural than to imitate what we love and reverence, which is the plainest demonstration of the greatest honour, in that we think it our perfection and happiness to be like our Saviour.

And that which perfects our love, is an undaunted courage and resolution in professing the Faith of Christ, whatever dangers and miseries it may expose us to in this World; as St. *John* tells us, *There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear*, 1 Joh. 5. 18. when we can *hate Father and Mother, Wife and Children, Brethren and Sisters for the sake of Christ, and sacrifice our lives also for him rather than abjure his Gospel, or violate his Laws.* These are

the

the proper expreſſions of our love to Chriſt, which are ſummarily comprehended in believing his Goſpel, and obeying it; for to be a true Lover of Chriſt ſignifies neither more nor leſs than to be a good Chriſtian, one who diligently obeys all the Laws of the Goſpel.

This is a ſhort account of the Nature of our Love to Chriſt, which deſerves a larger Diſcourſe; but I am now haſtening to a concluſion, and what I have already ſaid, is ſo plain and eaſie, that it may be underſtood without a larger explication. Our love to Chriſt is not ſuch a ſubtil, airy, and metaphyſical notion, as ſome men repreſent it to be, but is a vital Principle of Action, which governs our lives, and makes us fruitful in good works: And indeed of all miſtakes there is none more fatal and dangerous than to miſtake the nature of our love to Chriſt, becauſe this is a practical Errour, which hath an immediate influence upon our lives, and one miſtake in the Principles or Rules of Action is of greater conſequence than a great many falſe Opinions, which end in ſpeculation: And therefore for a concluſion

ſion of all, I ſhall briefly take notice of thoſe miſtakes ſome men have been guilty of concerning the nature and expreſſions of our love to Chriſt.

And firſt, as they tell us that Chriſt falls in love with *our Perſons*, without conſidering any qualifications in us, which may make us fit objects of his love, ſo in requital to him, we muſt love *the Perſon of Chriſt*. This I confeſs is as certain and evident as any demonſtration in *Euclide*, that if we love Chriſt, we muſt love his *Perſon*, for the Perſon of Chriſt is Chriſt himſelf, and if we love Chriſt, we muſt love him, and if they would be ſatisfied with this, the diſpute would be at an end; but this will not ſerve their turn, and therefore we muſt examine what they mean by loving the *Perſon* of Chriſt: Now they oppoſe our love to the *Perſon* of Chriſt to our love to him *upon account of his benefits*, *to our love to our ſelves*, and *to our duties*.

Firſt, we muſt love the Perſon of Chriſt in oppoſition to his benefits, that is, we muſt not conſider what advantages we do, or may receive from Chriſt, what he hath done or ſuffered for us, but we muſt love his perſon purely

purely for himself without any other considerations to endear him to us: This matter is very gravely stated and determined by * *W. B.* who tells us, 1. *That it is a good and lawful thing to love Christ in reference to his benefits.* This is a very liberal grant, that gratitude which hath hitherto been accounted a great and excellent vertue, is now owned to be a lawful thing. 2. *It is our duty to love Christs Person, to have our hearts drawn out with love to the very Person of Christ.* This is so certainly true, that even those men, who love Christ for his benefits, love his Person. But 3. *The excellency of Christs Person is not the object of my Faith, but Christ crucified.* 4. *Though Christ crucified be the object of my Faith, yet the personal excellencies of Christ are the object of my Love: yea it is a more excellent thing yet to love the Person of Christ, than the benefits of Christ, a more excellent thing to have my heart drawn out in love to the Person of Christ, than to have my heart drawn out in love to him for his benefits.* Now what can be the meaning of all this, but that the excellency and perfection of our love to Christ consists in loving him for no reason; the proper

W. B. Christs Personal excellency the object of our love, p. 15.

proper object and reason of love is *Goodness*; to love that which is good for nothing is the folly and degeneracy of love, and it is as foolish and impossible a task to love a Person, who hath been good to us, not because he hath been good, but for no reason: Now this is the case here, for if you separate the Person and Personal Excellencies of Christ from the consideration of his benefits, his personal goodness from the expressions of his love and goodness to our selves and others, it can be no object nor reason of our love; for a goodness which doth no good, or never did any, or which is all one, is considered as doing none, is so far from being the object of our love, that it is not the object of our understanding; for we cannot understand what that goodness means, which never did any good. God challenges our love not upon account of an imaginary goodness of Nature, which never did any good, but for the real and sensible effects of his goodness in the works of Creation and Providence, and the Redemption of Mankind by our Lord Jesus Christ; and Christ himself challenges our love for the like reasons, because he hath loved

loved us, and dyed for us, and now intercedes for us, and will at the last day bestow a Crown of Glory and Immortality on us, but never, as I can observe, requires such an abstracted and metaphysical love to his Person, without any respect to his benefits.

Indeed these men seem not to understand themselves, when they oppose our love to the Person of Christ to our love to him upon account of his benefits; for when you inquire what this Person of Christ is, which is the object of our love, then they describe his beauty and perfections, *the comelineſs of his Perſon, the ſweetneſs of his diſpoſition, his great riches, that he is a good, ſuitable to all our wants*, that in him we ſhall find whatever we need; *if you be poor, he is rich; if you be fooliſh, he is wiſe; if you be out of the way, I am the way, ſaith he; if you want a Director in the way, I am the Truth; if you be in the dark, I am light; if you be wicked and ſinful, he is Righteouſneſs, the Lord our Righteouſneſs.* Now either all this ſignifies the benefits we receive by Christ, or it ſignifies nothing, and how then do theſe perſonal Excellencies of Christ differ from his benefits? nay,

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when they direct us how to attain to this love to the Person of Christ, they bid us *behold how Christ hath loved us, and our persons, how many impediments his love hath broken thorough, how free it is*, so free that there was no reason for his love to us, *neither likeness, benefit, nor love*, &c. and they teach us *to use Christ much*, if we would love his person: *in any good thing you have, the more you use it, the more you prize it, and the more you prize it, the more you love it; if you have a good friend, the more you use him, the more you prize him, and the more you prize him, the more you love him; if you have a good Horse, the more you use him, the more you prize him, &c. if you have a good Knife, the more you use it, &c. if you would love Christ, use him much, and then the more you will prize him, and the more you will love him.* W. B. *ibid.*

Now to let pass the rudeness of the Comparisons, this using Christ must signifie his benefits, and to prize and love Christ much, because we use him much, is to love him, because we make great advantage of him, and receive many benefits from him: which is neither better nor worse than to love him for his benefits.

The occasion of all this contradiction and confusion in these mens discourses is, that they do not distinguish between loving the benefit, and loving the person upon account of his benefits: It must indeed be acknowledged to be very bruitish and barbarous to delight in the gift, and to take no notice of the giver, to solace our selves in the effects of the divine bounty and goodness, and to make no returns of love and thankfulness and duty to God: this is to love the benefit, but not the person, who bestows this benefit: but those blessings and benefits we receive from God and Christ are the true reasons, why we are bound to love them, and could we be supposed to love God and Christ for no reason, or, as these men phrase it, purely for themselves, without respect to those many blessings we have received from them, it would not be accepted, because this is not a reasonable love, but an unaccountable and fooliſh passion.

The love we owe to God and Christ is no other than gratitude, because God loved us first, and our love is only a return of his; now thankfulness and gratitude includes a necessary respect

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to those blessings and benefits we have received: it is peculiar to God, who wants nothing, and can receive nothing from his Creatures, to love without any respect to benefits, but the love of indigent and dependent Creatures is a love of thankfulness, is a grateful acknowledgment of those many blessings we receive from God.

Secondly, These men oppose our love to *the person of Christ*, to our love to our selves: the first destroys the reason and the object of our love, and this destroys the principle of it; it is made the Character of a wicked man, who wants *an inward principle of love to God and Christ*, that *though he seeks to honour God never so much, yet all that he doth, is done out of love to himself, and therefore God abhors all that he performs. All the good things such a wicked man doth are for himself, either for self credit, or self ease, or self content, or self-safety; he sleeps, prays, hears, speaks, professeth for himself alone: hence acting always for himself, he committeth the highest degree of Idolatry -- makes himself a God, &c.* Hence the same Author thus exhorts Sinners; *away then out of your selves to the Lord Jesus -- go to him, and take* Shephards sincere Convert, p. 4. ed. 1672. Pag. 84

hold on him, not with the hand of presumption and love to thy self, to save thy self, but with the hand of Faith and love to him, to honour him: and a little after describing the *easie ways to Heaven, all which lead to Hell,* he reckons among the rest, *the way of self-love, whereby a man fearing terribly he shall be damned, useth diligently all means, whereby he shall be saved. Here is the strongest difficulty of all, to row against the stream, to hate a mans self* (our own Souls and eternal Salvation) *and then to follow Christ fully:* now is not this a hard case, that before we can love God and Christ as we ought, we must root out the very principle of all love; that we must learn to hate Salvation and eternal happiness, before we can close with Christ for Salvation! he might well say, that this is the strongest difficulty of all, for indeed it is impossible; love to our selves is the foundation of our love to all other things, even to God himself; he that does not love himself, will love nothing else; he that hates himself and his own Soul, and despises eternal Salvation, will not care for Christ, nor Salvation by him: all the motives and arguments of the Gos-

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pel to perſwade us to love, and fear, and obey God, are founded on ſelf-love; for how is it poſſible, that we ſhould be affected with a due ſenſe of Gods goodneſs to us? that we ſhould be excited and quickned by the hopes of ſuch great rewards? that we ſhould be reſtrain'd and govern'd by the fears of puniſhment? if we did not love our ſelves, if we did not care what became of us, whether we were happy or miſerable for ever.

It is a vain thing to perſwade a man not to love himſelf, for this is as natural and neceſſary, as it is for the fire to burn, or Sun to ſhine, it is not matter of our choice, it is not in our power to do otherwiſe; and all that ſuch diſcourſes as theſe can do, is either to make men Hypocrites, to pretend to do that which they cannot do; or to make honeſt men, who cannot thus cheat and delude themſelves, deſpair of their Salvation, becauſe they cannot find themſelves contented without Salvation, that Chriſt without Comfort and without Salvation cannot ſatisfie them.

It is true, when men ſet up ſelf in oppoſition to God, when ſelf-love tempts them to diſobey God, to deſpiſe his Counſels, to renounce their Faith

and Religion, this is a very vicious and mistaken self-love, such men neither love themselves nor God in a proper sense, because it is our interest as well as duty to obey God: such men are Idolaters, as our Author speaks, because they set up self above God, and in opposition to him; but when our love to our selves teaches us to love God, and in all things to submit our selves to his will and pleasure, we do, as we ought to do; and they who separate our love to God from our love to our selves, from the care of our own happiness and Salvation, do plainly declare, that they neither understand the nature of man, nor the Gospel of Christ.

Thirdly, They oppose our love to Christ to our own duties, that is, they oppose our love to Christ to the most proper and natural expression of our love to him: herein Dr. *Owen* places the *chastity of our affections to Christ*, (which you know is a great marriage duty) *in not taking any thing (as our own righteousness) into our affections and esteem for those ends and purposes, for which we have received Christ:* and God forbid, that any Christian should; for our own righteousness and duties cannot be our Mediators and Advo-

Communion, p. 165.

cates,

cates, cannot expiate for our past sins, nor merit Heaven for us, which Christ hath done: what then is the difference? why it is only this, that the Dr. places the Righteousness of Christ in the room of our righteousness, to be not only the foundation, but the condition of the Covenant of Grace, and then makes it an expression of our chast affections to Christ, quite to thrust out our own righteousness, and to allow it no place in our Religion; he first makes Christ all to us, (more than ever Christ intended to make himself) and leaves no room for any thing else, and then warns us upon our vow of Chastity not to take any thing into Christs place; whereas, as he has ordered the matter, we must take our own righteousness into Christs place, or else cast it quite away, for there is no other place left for it: what he alledges for this, I have sufficiently considered already, and shall not now repeat it; but is it not very strange, that when our Saviour hath made our obedience the great and principal expression of our love to him, these men should make such a competition between our love to Christ, and our obedience? should put such jea-

louſies into peoples heads, what great danger there is of their own duties and righteouſneſs, leſt they ſhould prove like *fooliſh lovers, who when they are to wooe for the Lady, fall in love with the Handmaid, that is only to lead them to her: So men fall in love with, and dote upon their own duties, and reſt contented with the naked performance of them* (that is, with doing good) *which are only Hand-maids to lead the Soul unto the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*: is not this the ready way to perſwade people, that our love to Chriſt conſiſts in ſomething more refined and ſpiritual than obedience? which will quickly teach them to love Chriſt without obeying him, and not run the hazard of doting and reſting on duties. No man that underſtands the Goſpel of Chriſt, can think that his own righteouſneſs and obedience can merit Heaven; when we have done the beſt we can, we muſt acknowledge our ſelves to be unprofitable Servants, who have done but our duty; and muſt aſcribe the praiſe and glory of all to the Grace of God in and through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who pardons our paſt ſins, and our preſent infirmities, and beſtows ſuch great rewards

Shephards ſincere Convert, pag. 197.

wards on us, as we could never deserve; and if this will not preserve us from doting and resting on duties, there is no other remedy, but to let them quite alone, since it is so dangerous to meddle with them: and yet if we believe Mr. *Shepherd*, this will not secure us; for *it is one thing to trust to be saved by duties, another thing to rest in duties; a man trusts unto them, when he is of this opinion, that only good duties can save him; a man rests in duties, when he is of this opinion, that only Christ can save him, but in his practice he goes about to save himself*: that is, does all the good he can, with as much vigour and earnestness as if we were to merit Heaven by it, and then thinks to make amends for this ungodly resting in duties by acknowledging, *when he hath done all, that he is an unprofitable servant.* But the mystery of this will appear more in what follows. *Sincere Convert*, pag. 170.

Thus you see what the object of the Saints love is, *the very person of Christ, in opposition to his benefits, in opposition to self-love, in opposition to duties*: let us now inquire, Secondly, How they express their love to the person of Christ, and that consists in preferring

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Christ above all, in admiring his beauty and excellencies and perfections; *the Soul takes a view of all that is in the World, the lusts of the flesh, &c. and sees it all to be vanity. --- It views also legal righteousness, blamelessness before men, uprightness of conversation, duties upon conviction, and counts them all to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ. --- Beloved peace, beloved natural relations, beloved wisdom and learning, beloved righteousness, duties, all loss compared with Christ.* * *They value him above all other things and persons; they value him above their lives; they value him above all spiritual excellencies, and all other righteousness whatever.* * *He is their joy, their Crown, their rejoicing, their life, food, health, strength, desire, righteousness, salvation, blessedness:* now who can desire more than this? and yet if we examine the meaning of it, it will appear to be a mistaken and useless passion, such as our Saviour will not approve, nor accept; I have * already showed you, what these men mean by the person and personal excellencies of Christ, that whatever is spoken of Christ, whether in respect of his Gospel and Revelations, or his propitiation

F. O. Com. p. 63.

Ibid. pag. 154.

Pag. 140.

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pitiation and Sacrifice, or his mediation and intercession for us, these men convert into personal Graces, his personal fulness, and righteousness, and wisdom, *&c.* which we must immediately derive from the person of Christ; and this is the *person* of Christ, which these men so much admire, and prize, and value, above all other things in the World, a Person in whom there is all fulness, righteousness, life, power, beauty, and every thing that a Sinner wants; this is the person, whom they prefer before all legal righteousness, spiritual excellencies, duties, obedience, before the love of God himself, which is by these men accounted no better than a legal righteousness; the meaning of all which is, that they prefer the person of Christ, which hath such a perfect righteousness for them, and will save them without requiring any legal conditions of them, infinitely before the Religion and Gospel of Christ, before obedience to his commands, before the love and fear of God: so that the foundation of their love to Christ is a fond imagination, that he will save them by his righteousness without any righteousness and holiness of their own;

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this makes them so fond of the person of Christ, to call him their *joy, and their Crown, their life, food, health, strength, righteousness*, because they look upon him as a refuge and Sanctuary for the wicked and ungodly, where the *greatest, the oldest, the stubbornest transgressor* may shelter himself from the wrath of God; and I have some reason to think, that Christ will not much prize and value such devoto's as these, nor their obsequious flatteries or praise.

And yet herein the devotion of these men consists, in admiring, prizing, valuing, the person of Christ: this is that * *Evangelical Righteousness, we must gain by duties, more prizing of acquaintance with, desire after, loving and delighting in Union with the Lord Jesus Christ: a moral man, who rests in duties* (that is, who does what God commands him, and expects to be saved by Christ) *may grow in legal righteousness*, that is in true holiness and piety, but this will not avail, unless we grow in this *Evangelical Righteousness: this is the great end of duties to carry us to the Lord Jesus Christ the only Saviour: hear a Sermon to carry thee to Jesus Christ: fast and pray, and get a full tide of affections*

* Shepherds sincere Convert, pag. 173:

Pag. 178.

ſections in them to carry thee to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that is, to get more love of him, more acquaintance with him, more Union with him: ſo ſorrow for thy ſins, that thou maiſt be more fitted for Chriſt, that thou maiſt prize Chriſt the more: uſe thy duties as Noahs *Dove did her Wings, to carry thee to the Ark of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt: —— Or as it is with a poor man, that is to go over a great water for a treaſure on the other ſide, though he cannot fetch the Boat, he calls for it, and though there be no treaſure in the Boat, yet he uſeth the Boat to carry him over to the treaſure: ſo Chriſt is in Heaven, and thou on Earth, he doth not come to thee, and thou canſt not go to him, now call for a Boat: though there is no grace, no good, no ſalvation, in a pithleſs duty, yet uſe it to carry thee over to the treaſure, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. When thou comeſt to hear, ſay, Have over Lord by this Sermon, when thou comeſt to pray, ſay, Have over Lord by this Prayer to a Saviour, &c.* So that it ſeems, the whole buſineſs of our love to Chriſt, and Evangelical Righteouſneſs, conſiſts in ſome flights of fancy and imagination, in admiring and valuing the perſon of Jeſus Chriſt, in getting an

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acquaintance with him, and Union to him; and the business of all Religion is *to have over to Christ*, that we may love and prize his person and personal Righteousness above all things in the World: It is not so much the business of Sermons to acquaint us with the nature and attributes, works and providences of God, and to instruct us in our duty to him, and to encourage us to the practice of it by all the motives and arguments of the Gospel, as *to have over to Christ*, to acquaint us with his fulness, and Righteousness, and all-sufficiency to save us without such a legal Righteousness of our own: the design of Prayer is not so much to affect our Souls with a sense of the divine Majesty and greatness, to worship and adore the great Creator of the World, and to express our trust and affiance in him; as *to have over to Christ*, to fetch pardon, and life, and health, and Righteousness from him: that sorrow for sin is not so much to imbitter sin to us, and to confirm and strengthen our resolutions against it, as to teach us to prize and value the person of Christ more who is our Righteousness: in a word, the nature and design of Religion is

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now changed from being the homage and worship of God, the certain means of pleasing him, and transforming us into his nature and likeness, which is the natural end of Religion, into a *Cock boat*, or *Skuller*, to *waft us over* to Christ.

Here we see the true reason, why these men do so much despise morality in comparison with those Gospel duties of hearing Sermons, and Prayer, and Confession, and Humiliation, and Fasting, *&c.* Because as they handle the matter, the practice of moral vertues cannot *have us over to Christ*, cannot apply the Righteousness and fulness of Christ to us, nor ravish our fancies with glorious images and Idæas of his person; and since all the duties of Religion, are such *pithless* things, *which have no grace, no good, no salvation* in them, but as they *have us over to Christ*, *poor morality* must needs be a worthless thing.

Thus I have finisht my designed task, and upon a review of it, it makes me amazed to think, how strangely these men have transformed the Religion of our Saviour, and disfigur'd the Gospel of Christ; how they have undermined

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the fundamental design of the Gospel, which is to make men good and vertuous and like to God; how they have misrepresented the ends of Christ coming into the World, and abused his expiation and Sacrifice, and Righteousness, and Intercession to the Patronage of Vice and Wickedness; how they have laid snares to betray some men to a licentious life, and to entangle others in endless troubles and perplexities of mind: how under a pretence of advancing the person of Christ, they have in effect through ignorance, and mistake, and want of consideration (for I am not willing to suspect any worse cause) banisht his Religion out of the World: I have faithfully and impartially stated the case, examined their proofs from Scripture and reason, and the result of all is no more but this, that the only way to please God and to save our Souls, is to obey the Precepts of the Gospel, trusting in the mediation of our Lord Jesus Christ, who having *perfected* the work of our redemption, *is become the Author of Eternal Salvation to all them that obey him.*

FINIS.